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THE EFFECT OF TEACHERS' THEORETICAL ORIENTATIONS ON THE WRITING PRODUCED BY GRADE ONE STUDENTS

BY

©

JOHN ROGER PROCTOR

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
OF MASTER OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

EDMONTON, ALBERTA
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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled The Effect of Teachers' Theoretical Orientations on the Writing Produced by Grade One Students submitted by John Roger Proctor in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education in Elementary Education.

Grace Malicky
(Supervisor)

R.G. McIntosh

David Dillon

Date: October 8, 1986

To My Wife, Gayle,

For Our Never-Ending Dialogue

About the Meaning and Purpose of Education

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the effect which teachers' beliefs about writing and writing instruction have on the writing which is produced by students in Grade One. Based on a review of the literature, two orientations to writing were postulated. For the purpose of the study, they were classified as the "traditional skills" and "process" orientations to writing. A set of partial specifications for each orientation was developed. These specifications formed the base for the development of a survey instrument which was designed to detect the beliefs which teachers had about writing instruction in Grade One.

A major component of the study was in the creation of the survey instrument. A series of item verification procedures and a pilot study resulted in a twenty-four item survey which utilized a Likert scale response set on a continuum of strongly agree to strongly disagree. The survey entitled Theoretical Orientation to Writing Profile (TOWP) was distributed to 38 Grade One teachers who teach in 19 schools in a school system which has both rural and urban populations. The teachers were requested to complete the survey and return it with a class set of the children's writing. The writing sample was generated according to a set of procedures developed by the author.

In order to establish a referent profile the TOWP was distributed to a language arts committee which professed to having a strong process orientation. Based on the responses received from this committee, a model process profile was developed. By comparing the teachers' responses to the model profile an indication of the teachers' theoretical orientations was established. Analysis of the teachers' profiles showed that the TOWP had the potential to differentiate the two orientations partially specified in the instrument. Two groups of teachers were established based on their relative proximity to the model. The group which most closely matched the model were classed as the process group, while those furthest from it were classed as the traditional skills group. The children's writing from the two groups was analyzed and related back to the teachers' orientation indicated by the TOWP in order to determine the effect which the teachers' beliefs had upon the writing.

Certain distinct differences between the writing of the two groups were evident. The findings showed that the teachers' beliefs were reflected more in the content of the children's writing than it was in the mechanics-presentation aspect. Children in the process group wrote more, used better handwriting, and made less spelling errors. When the writing was scored holistically, the process group scored significantly higher. Their writing was characterized by a more complete story sense, and they indicated an audience awareness which was not present in the writing produced by the traditional skills group.

These findings suggest that teachers should examine the beliefs which they hold about the development of writing abilities in Grade One in order to determine how their students may more readily access the writing process. Continued investigation into what teachers believe about beginning writing instruction and how these beliefs affect their students' developing concepts of the writing process is indicated as a direction for future research.

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Chapter 1

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

> For a century now, universities have complained about the quality of their students' writing. When the media joined the hue and cry, every learning institution in the land seemed to address the matter. However, after endless debate and thought, no one has yet stated clearly what the problem is, and certainly no one has found a permanent cure. (McDaniel, 1984, p. 56)

Writing and particularly the writing development of young children has until quite recently been a neglected area of educational research. Donald Graves reports that in the twenty-five year period prior to 1977, "Only 156 studies in writing in the elementary grades ... (had)... been done in the United States" (1984, p. 92). However, children's writing has become the subject of a growing research emphasis over the last two decades (Whiteman, 1980). During this period not only has there been a developing awareness of the need for research into writing, but, of equal importance, there has also been a growing consensus that the traditional research paradigm has failed to provide the insights necessary for educators to comprehend how children learn to write. Thus, the very face of the writing research itself has changed from experimental designs which concentrated on manipulating the writing environment in order to produce "better writing," to longitudinal studies in which the researchers have observed what writers actually do during the composing process (Clay, 1975; Graves, 1973; Harste, Woodward & Burke, 1984; Murray, 1984; Temple, Nathan & Burris, 1982).

A major distinction between the current research efforts and the more traditional methods is that the child is no longer the object of research, research which manipulated the writing environment in order to discover the optimal conditions for the child to be "taught" how to write. In the current research tradition, the child is the informer, helping the researcher to learn about the emergent writing abilities of the child. The child is now the subject of the research, and the researcher concentrates on observing and describing the conditions and environment which contribute to the child's emerging ability to write (Bissex, 1980; Calkins, 1983, 1986; Clay, 1975; Graves, 1978).

One of the outcomes of this research has been to question many of the traditional conceptions of how children learn to write, among them the idea that children first learn about writing when they enter school. Current research has challenged this notion by observing and reporting how young children develop literacy at home long before they enter any formal educational setting (Harste et al., 1984; Smith, 1983). Thus, it has concentrated to a large extent on those environmental influences which shape the child's developing awareness of the reading and writing processes (Bissex, 1980; Newman, 1984).

Arising out of this new emphasis on longitudinal descriptive studies of children's writing processes has been the conclusion that "traditional teaching programs are not designed to take advantage of the prior knowledge that children have about print or the function of print" (Dobson, 1983, p.2). Thus, traditional programs which have purported to teach children to write have concentrated largely on the "transcription skills of writing" (Dobson, 1983, p.2), and have been based on the notion that children need to be taught the mechanical aspects of writing before proceeding on to the production of some form of meaningful connected discourse (Birnbaum, 1980; Whiteman, 1980).

This emphasis on "writing skills" preceding written discourse has pervaded the teaching of writing in schools despite suggestions over the years (Burrows, Jackson & Saunders, 1937; Elbow, 1973; Graves, 1983; Calkins, 1986) that this practice is essentially non-productive, or even counter-productive to the creation of competent writers. What these writers and others have suggested is that children can learn to write if teachers allow the process of writing to evolve naturally by providing an environment which demonstrates to the child that writing has a purpose and an audience (Grundlach, 1982; Moss, 1982; Newman, 1983).

But change, particularly educational change, comes slowly, and although there exists a growing body of criticism of traditional writing instructional practices, it is evident that many teachers still persist in using these techniques in their classrooms when teaching children to write. In her review of writing research Marcia Whiteman notes that "...what writing instruction there is ... (in schools)... generally consists of workbook exercises and drills in what are thought to be 'before writing skills,' i.e. penmanship, vocabulary, spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and standard English usage" (1980, p. 150). Underlying these practices are not only a set of assumptions about language and writing, but of perhaps more importance, a belief system which guides and develops these assumptions (Harste et al., 1984). Unfortunately, at this point in time, little research has been done to detect and examine the assumptions that teachers make about writing or the beliefs which underlie these assumptions.

Traditional research in the field of writing has emphasized the manipulation of the curriculum or the teacher's presentation of it. Graves reports that "From 1955-1972, sixty-eight percent (68%) of all research was concerned with what the teacher was doing in the classroom. We were so preoccupied with ourselves as teachers that only twelve percent (12%) of the studies were concerned with what children did when they wrote" (1984, pp. 92-3). The growing emphasis on longitudinal descriptive research into the writing processes of young children is doing a great deal to reverse this trend. However, given the fact that there has not been an abundance of research into what teachers believe about writing and its development, and concomitantly how these beliefs affect the writing done by children in the classroom, it is apparent that efforts in this regard would serve to further expand our knowledge of how children develop writing abilities.

Need for the Study

There may, in fact, be some urgency in the need for the type of research which tries to discern within the psychological context of teaching, those beliefs, values and principles which the teacher has concerning how teaching and learning takes place (Nespor, 1984). Based on research which they carried out in 1981 and 1983, Harste and his associates were led to the conclusion that "many of the instructional assumptions currently made by teachers are faulty at best and debilitating at worst. In no instance ... would the assumptions underlying ... instruction have been appropriate ones from which to operate instructionally" (1984, p. 14). Robert Conners in his examination of teachers' "thought processes, beliefs and principles during instruction" came to the conclusion that

> The dimension of teacher behavior that deals with how teachers think, that is plan, make decisions and judgements, and the underlying beliefs and principles that influence these processes, has been a relatively neglected research tradition. (1978, p. 2)

Underlying Conners' assertion is the assumption that the curriculum which the teacher develops is based to a large extent on the ideological stance which the teacher holds. Research which has investigated teachers' beliefs has come to the conclusion that the beliefs which teachers have not only influence their teaching practices, but, of more importance, have a significant effect on the learning which takes place in the classroom (Harste & Burke, 1980; Spanjer, 1982). Thus, research which has tended to look at classroom methods and practices would appear to be misdirected. This being the case, Harootunian suggests that "... researchers' attentions should turn to the subjectively reasonable beliefs that teachers hold. An examination of these beliefs and study of evidence bearing upon them would become the initiating focus" (1980, p. 267). This position is supported by Nespor who conducted a major review of the studies into the beliefs which teachers hold about a wide variety of teaching contexts and variables from curriculum to community influences. An important conclusion of this review was that

> ... theories of teaching, products of experience and accommodation to the practical problems of the classroom act as strong inertial forces which must be well understood if programs of reform and change in teaching practice are to be effectively implemented. (1984, p. 3)

Thus, research which seeks to connect implicit and explicit ideologies concerning teaching and learning with specific classroom practice and behaviors must essentially start with what teachers believe (Conners, 1978; Marland, 1977; Nespor, 1984); the underlying contention being that

> An understanding of what beliefs, principles and theories influence teacher behavior, and how they influence that behavior, is basic to an understanding of the complexities of teaching. (Conners, 1978, p.4)

The challenge which faces the researcher is to develop a method of determining what a teacher or group of teachers believes about some particular aspect of curricular practice, and then to determine how this belief affects student learning.

Purpose of the Study

This study has two major thrusts. The first is to determine the beliefs which Grade One teachers hold concerning the development of early writing abilities in their classrooms, and the second is to examine the effects which these beliefs have upon the writing which is produced by the students. A major component of the study, therefore, will be to develop and field test a survey instrument which has the potential to indicate what teachers believe about writing and the development of writing in Grade One classrooms. The overall purpose of the study is to determine the extent to which those teacher's beliefs, as they are defined by the survey instrument, appear in the writing which is produced by the students.

Research Questions

The research questions to be addressed in this study are:

1. Can a survey instrument be developed which has the potential to identify the theoretical orientation which teachers bring to writing instruction in Grade One classrooms?
2. Can this survey instrument produce a profile which is consistent with the beliefs underlying the "traditional-skills" orientation to writing, and conversely, can a profile be produced which reflects the "process" approach to writing and writing instruction?
3. Does the writing produced by Grade One students reflect the theoretical orientation to writing which underlies the teacher's instruction?
4. What, if any, are the differences in the writing produced by Grade One students who receive writing instruction from teachers who have apparently opposing beliefs about the development of writing abilities in Grade One children?

Limitations and Delimitations

The essential component of this study is to evaluate the efficacy of using a survey instrument to determine the theoretical orientation to writing and writing instruction held by a select number of Grade One teachers. As the survey simply asks the teachers to respond to a series of statements about writing and writing instruction in Grade One, and as the statements are restricted to two major viewpoints, it will delineate only a limited overview of teachers' attitudes to writing and writing instruction in Grade One. A second limitation hinges on the method of collecting the writing sample from the Grade One students. As only one sample will be collected under a particular set of constraints, the conclusions reached about the influence of the teachers' theoretical orientations on the children's writing will be only tentative at this point. In this study also, no attempt will be made to take into account the ability levels of the children (or any other factors such as socio-economic status) in the classrooms from which the writing comes.

The study will seek to identify only two major theoretical orientations to writing. Thus, the statements in the survey will be directed at eliciting the degree of agreement or disagreement about only the beliefs which comprise these orientations.

The study will use only the survey instrument to ascertain the ideologies. No supporting data will be gathered to support or discount the conclusions drawn from the analysis of the teachers' responses to the survey. This is intentional, as the purpose of the study is to test the efficacy of using only the survey to detect the teachers' beliefs.

Because the controlling thesis of the study is that the teacher's theoretical orientation to writing will be reflected in the writing produced by the children in the teachers' classrooms, the students' performance on the writing task will be the sole method used to verify the teachers' response to the survey.

Assumptions

A major assumption of this study is that, with the assurance of anonymity, the teachers will respond to the survey based on their honest and accurate reaction to the statements which constitute the survey, and that these responses will reflect as closely as possible their theoretical orientation to writing and writing instruction. It is also assumed that the writing sample will be collected by the teachers adhering to the procedures outlined by the author.

Significance of the Study

The major significance of this study lies in its attempt to create another perspective on writing research. In making teacher beliefs, rather than classroom practice or instructional technique, the initial focus of writing research and program development, researchers, inservice personnel, teacher educators, and teachers themselves will have a valuable base from which to examine the basis of their current practices.

Inservice and teacher training programs can be directed much more effectively if those personnel responsible for initiating and running them have some indication of the ideological positions which the participants bring to the programs. Thus, teacher education and inservice programs which concentrate on methods and instructional techniques can perhaps be directed more fruitfully at having teachers examine their personal belief systems, given that they have some knowledge of how this affects their classroom practices.

If evidence can be produced which demonstrates to teachers how, and to what extent, their beliefs are translated into the writing which is produced by their students, then it is possible that teachers may reconsider the beliefs which underlie their classroom practice when they are expanding their professional development in this area.

Organization of the Thesis

Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature which is relevant as background to this study. It provides a description of the classroom practices commonly associated with the two orientations under discussion. It surveys the research which has looked at writing and writing instruction in Grade One. Finally it presents an overview of the ideologies which underlie both orientations.

Chapter 3 describes the design of the study. This includes the design and development of the survey instrument, the piloting process used in the validation of the instrument, the procedures used in the distribution and collection of teacher responses to the survey and the collection of the student writing samples. This chapter also includes the statistical and descriptive procedures used in the analysis of the student's writing.

Chapter 4 presents the results of the study and discusses them in terms of the research questions set out in Chapter 1.

Chapter 5 presents the summary and conclusion drawn from the research. It also presents the implications of the findings of the study for pre-service and inservice teacher education programs and for further research.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In any research into "writing" the first task is to establish what is meant by the term itself. Vernon Smith defines writing as "... the production of original text by children putting ideas on paper; not copying, filling in the blanks, sentence combining, or spelling or penmanship exercises" (1984, p. 2). What Smith is alleging by implication is that writing has traditionally been defined in terms of what he declares it is not, the surface features of the writing. Spanjer and Layne deem the traditional approach to writing as the "mechanics theoretical orientation to written language," and they define this orientation as "the teacher's and students' expressed emphasis on legibility, letter formation, grammar, spelling, and vocabulary" (1982, p.8). In contrast to this orientation, they postulate the "communication whole language orientation" which refers to " the teacher's and students' emphasis on the construction of text which has the purpose of sharing message intent effectively with an audience..." (1982, p. 8).

The contrast between the two orientations lies in the relative importance that is attached to the writer's obligation to the reader; thus, the major concern of teachers with the "mechanics" orientation to written language is with the the surface features of the writing, which are most often judged in terms of traditionally accepted social standards. Writing is essentially perceived as a form of etiquette wherein the avoidance of observable error rather than the communication of ideas is the essential component. Donald Graves summarizes the traditional attitude to writing in the following metaphor:

> When writing, Americans too often feel like the man who has been invited to a party of distinguished guests. Being a person of modest station he attends with great reluctance and discomfort. He has but one aim - to be properly attired, demonstrate correct manners, say as little as possible, and leave early. (Graves, 1983, p.63)

Like Graves' obsequious dinner guest, the emphasis in the traditional conception of writing appears to fall upon the outward appearance of the writing, those external features which are readily amenable to the eye of the discriminating reader. This point of view contrasts sharply with the "communication whole language" orientation which stresses the less noticeable aspects of writing, the ideas and the message which are being shared with the reader; therefore, concern for form and adherence to convention becomes a secondary consideration of the writer and the reader. This major difference in focus of the two orientations leads to differing conceptions about the procedures which must be followed in teaching children to write. Applebee illustrates this difference using two teachers, "X" and "Y", as examples.

> Teacher X believes that students learn to write by being taught the characteristics of good writing and then practicing them until they achieve them in their own writing.
>
> Teacher Y emphasizes the process of writing (where) ... writing is learned rather than taught and that students' power over language grows as they have meaningful experiences communicating with others.
> (Applebee, 1981, p.60)

Thus, in the traditional "skills" approach to writing instruction, children must develop a set of skills which are designed to give them the conventional writing tools, letters, words and grammar, before they can proceed to the actual communication of ideas. In the communication orientation, it is the process which is important, and children learn that the communication of ideas and thoughts with an audience is primary.

For the purposes of this study the foregoing descriptive definitions of writing will serve as the basis for all following discussion. These contrasting approaches to writing and writing instruction have been described by various titles; however, for convenience, they are termed "traditional skills" and "process" orientations in this study. A more detailed examination of each of these orientations and their effect on the development of writing in Grade One students follows.

The Traditional Skills Approach to the Teaching of Writing In Grade One

As Applebee (1981) has pointed out in his description of "Teacher X", traditionally it has been assumed that there are certain characteristics of good writing which children must access before they can move on to the writing of connected discourse. A second assumption of this orientation is that teachers have knowledge of these characteristics and must teach them to children, and a third is that the sequence of instruction necessary for children to learn them adequately has been established through research and soundly based pedagogical practice. Thus, the traditional approach to the teaching of writing has been based substantially on the belief that children entering Grade One do not bring with them a well-developed awareness of how the writing process works. Vernon Smith points out that a fairly comprehensive sample of Grade One teachers "are unaware that first graders can write well and assume that their students cannot write until they are taught to write" (1984, p.8). Based on this assumption, early writing instruction in Grade One has centered on a series the pre-writing activities which are specifically designed to prepare students for the writing experience to follow. Usually these readiness activities consist of having the children undergo a series of "readiness" tests. Based on the results of these tests, instruction typically begins with a series of "readiness" exercises designed to develop the students' fine motor control or eye-hand coordination. Children spend a great deal of time and effort in tracing, copying, and underwriting prescribed letter and word forms in order that eventually they will be able to handle the spatial relationships needed for correct writing form. There is a "concern for the child's (in)ability to stay within the lines ... predicated on the belief that handwriting signals muscle and eye coordination, and that coordination is the prerequisite of learning to read and write" (Harste et al., 1984, p.7).

Once children have completed the readiness activities they proceed onto the development of basic writing skills. These skills are perceived to be the fundamental components of the writing process, and they are taught to the children through drill and practice until the students achieve the appropriate level of mastery. Thus, "initial school experiences (are mainly) concerned with teaching the children the transcription skills of writing" (Dobson, 1983, p.2). Starting with skills such as letter formation, word building and word spacing, the students concentrate on activities which reflect the teacher's concerns for penmanship, neatness, correct spelling, punctuation, grammar, and standard English usage. The underlying assumption of this practice is that a foundation for later writing development is being established (Whiteman, 1980).

The majority of these writing skills are taught through drill and practice using workbooks and worksheets activities, activities which are built on the premise that writing is learned by practicing its component parts (Whiteman, 1980). In a survey of eight language arts texts commonly used in the United States, Donald Graves (1984) found that of the activities devoted to writing in Grade Two texts, 72 percent was given over to grammar and punctuation exercises, a percentage which increased as the texts evolved through the ensuing elementary grades. The goal of these activites is a form of mastery, based on the belief that "an error free performance on the basics ... (is necessary) ... since without it children will never be able to access the process" (Harste et al., 1984, p.5).

During the development of these skills children are given the opportunity to write, but it is usually on a topic assigned by the teacher or in response to the stimulus of a "story starter" or some other motivational device. The writing produced in such settings is then compared to a set standard and subsequently evaluated as to its relative correctness. At this stage "the eradication of error is more important than the encouragement of expression" (Graves, 1984, p.70). In responding to the children's writing the teacher's role is to point out to the student the errors which have been made in the apparent belief that children do not have "the information which they can use for self-correction" (Harste, et al., 1984, p. 5). The basis for this instruction is the belief that children develop writing competency by having their errors pointed out to them, and that eventually they will, through practice and correction, eliminate these errors.

The assumptions underlying the traditional Grade One writing program can be summarized as follows:

1. Children entering Grade One must be taught how to write.
2. There exists a prescribed sequence of skill development which builds the foundation for later writing.
3. Readiness skills are necessary to prepare students for future writing.
4. By learning the characteristics of good writing students can eventually incorporate them into their own writing.
5. The skills of writing can be taught through drill and practice using workbooks and worksheets.
6. The aim of writing instruction is the elimination of errors in letter formation, neatness, spelling, grammar, and usage.
7. One of the teacher's roles is to develop writing assignments for the students and then to evaluate the writing which is produced in terms of pre-determined standards.

The Process Approach to the Teaching of Writing in Grade One

> It is not children - but adults - who have separated writing from art, song and play; it is adults who have turned writing into an exercise on dotted-line paper, into a matter of rules, lessons, and cautious behavior.
>
> (Calkins, 1986, p.35)

In direct contrast to most traditional conceptions of how children develop writing abilities which have stressed the "skills before writing" approach, there has recently emerged a growing emphasis on the process of writing which stresses a "writing first" orientation. In many respects the process approach has developed almost as a direct reaction to the traditional methods of teaching writing in schools. Proponents of the process approach take the position that in many ways traditional writing instruction has done more to hinder than help in the development of proficient writers (Calkins, 1986; Graves, 1983; Harste, et al., 1983; Temple et al., 1982).

These challenges to traditional practices have arisen from the growing body of research which has looked at the concept of emergent literacy. The focus of this research has been on discovering how young children develop literacy before entering school. It has concentrated to a great extent on the environmental influences which contribute to the child's developing awareness of the reading and writing processes (Bissex, 1980; Clay, 1975; Newman, 1984). A major conclusion arising out of this research has been that most pre-school children understand the fundamental concepts of the writing process long before they encounter any formal educational setting (Harste et al., 1984; Wilucki, 1984), including the ideas that writing is functional and serves specific purposes (Smith, 1984), and that writing is usually intended for some form of audience (Harste et al., 1984; Mayer & Brause, 1984).

Research which has looked at what children in Grade One classrooms actually do during the writing process (Graves, 1973, 1978; Hansen, Newkirk & Graves, 1985) has supported and extended the findings of research into early writing done by young children. Among the conclusions reached by this research is that, in direct contrast to traditional belief, children entering Grade One can write if they are given the right kind of opportunities (Dobson, 1983; Duncan, 1984; Graves, 1983; Newman, 1983). Thus, the claim is made that the major shortcomings of traditional early writing programs lie in their refusal to acknowledge the literacy set which the child brings to school, and the assumption that the writing process must be simplified in order for young children to gain access to it. As Dobson points out, " traditional teaching programs are not designed to take advantage of the prior knowledge that children have about print and the function of print" (1983, p.2).

In many ways the notion that children need to be taught the mechanical aspects of writing before proceeding onto the production of some form of connected discourse

(Birnbaum, 1980) is in direct contradistinction to the position assumed by the process school which is based on the idea that,

> ... it is especially important the primary emphasis ... (in early writing experiences) ... be placed on the meaningful uses of language to represent the students' own ideas. Mastery of the subskills such as letter formation, and word and letter order will occur gradually as a child recognizes the need for these conventions. (Birnbaum, 1980, p. 203)

The underlying contention of this approach is that not only do children enter school with a sound fundamental knowledge of the writing process (Bissex, 1980; Clay, 1975; Harste et al., 1984; Wilucki, 1984), but, furthermore, they can develop and expand their writing abilities naturally if they are given the freedom and opportunity to do so (Calkins, 1985; Bennett, 1981; DeFord, 1980; Dobson, 1983; Graves, 1983; Moss, 1982; Smith, 1984).

The assumption made by the proponents of the "process" approach to children's early writing is summarized by Vera Milz when she contends that "If a child can acquire meaningful and communicative oral competence without taking 'talking lessons' that same child can relate to the printed forms of language without reading and writing lessons" (1976, p.12). This point of view represents a somewhat radical departure from what has been the traditionally accepted basis for writing instruction. Her position, however, receives support from Frank Smith who suggests that "...every child who can talk has the capacity to learn to write and also to seize upon the possibilities of written language with enthusiasm" (1983, p. 81). What is being suggested is that the natural development of the beginning writer can proceed without direct intervention on the part of the teacher given that a certain writing environment is present in the classroom. Susan Bennett in her review of the research conducted by Elbow (1973), Graves (1978), and others, summarizes the essence of the process approach:

> ...if teachers ignore the mechanics used (or misused) by beginning writers, if they encourage and stimulate the production of both oral and written language, if they reward the expression of ideas and value fluency and

> creativity, then through hours of practice, both reading other's words and generating their own, children will naturally recognize and utilize spelling rules, punctuation marks and proper syntax. (1981, p. 3)

These conclusions have, to a large extent, been based on a growing body of longitudinal, descriptive research. By looking at what children actually do during the composing process these researchers have been led to postulate that children can develop the ability to write if the writing situation is one which facilitates the natural development of writing. Marie Clay has shown that "the creative urge of the child to write down his own ideas ... is the important thing to be fostered in written language" (1975, p.1). Her observations of children between the ages of four and seven led her to suggest that all children access the writing process according to distinct concepts and principles, and that by observing what the child is doing during the writing process, the teacher can clearly identify the learning stages through which the child is progressing.

The suggestion throughout this research is that the lessons learned from observing the natural language development of young children provide all the clues needed for implementing the writing process in classrooms. Calkins effectively summarizes this point of view: "If we are to help young children break into the code of written language, we need to take our cue from how babies learn to talk" (1986, p.36). The lesson which she proposes is to "allow children to learn written language by using it, as best they can, for real purposes, and by having adults see through their errors to what they want to say" (1986, p. 36).

Holdaway (1984) has expanded and provided more detail on the lessons which can be learned from looking at the natural language learning processes of children. He includes ten major ideas which he maintains can be applied to all language learning sitautions. Briefly summarized, they are:

1. Important people in the learner's developmental environment treat the expectation of learning with faith and appreciation.

2. They (learners) observe with curiosity and emulate models.
3. They determine to make sense of their world.
4. They use knowledge of the world to predict meaning and to fill in gaps in their knowledge and skills.
5. They approximate and take risks and judge for themselves new challenges.
6. They monitor their own performance to develop self-improving strategies.
7. They actively participate in activities which move them to more maturity.
8. They practice at their own pace and their own level of persistence.
9. They take risks within easy reach of security (safety-netting).
10. They avoid pain and seek pleasure.

(Holdaway, 1984, pp.13-16)

In attempting to apply these general language learning principles to the early development of children's writing, process writing proponents have undermined many of the time honored traditional beliefs about writing development. Dobson claims that "Traditional programs teach first and expect children will be able to write later, once mechanical skills have been acquired. The very opposite is true - children produce better writing and are more positive writers when they are simply allowed to write" (1983, p.19). Harste et al. are even more direct in their criticism of traditional writing instruction.

> Until the beliefs about beginning writing and reading programs are changed, for example, children have to be "ready for an activity" before embarking upon it, or that something more BASIC must be learned before proceeding to actual writing, beginning writing and reading programs do as much, if not more to inhibit written language growth as they do to facilitate it.
> (1985, p. 32)

Vernon Smith (1984), in his review of the major research findings into the writing process of young children, effectively summarizes the beliefs which underlie the "process" approach to writing and writing instruction.

1. The process of literacy learning (learning to read and write) begins between the ages of two and five (Clay, 1975).
2. All children can learn to write (Applebee, 1981; Graves, 1982).
3. All children want to learn to write (Burrows, 1939; Cazden, 1981; Graves, 1978; King and Rentel, 1979).
4. Children want to write right. During these early years writing improves without direct instruction (Clay, 1975; Goodman & Goodman, 1981; King &Rentel, 1979; Milz, 1980).
5. Time on task is related to learning - "You learn to write by writing" (Smith, 1981).
6. In general, schools do not provide adequate opportunities for writing (Graves, 1978; Applebee, 1981; Filion, 1979).
7. By the age of five to six children know that they can write (Harste et al., 1984; Graves, 1983; Clay, 1975).
8. Teacher expectations are related to learning. Teachers underestimate the capacity of pupils at almost every stage of education from the primary school through university. Many teachers of 5-6 year olds assume that they cannot write (Graves, 1982).
9. When communication skills are allowed to develop naturally, writing precedes reading for some children (probably many, perhaps all) (Bissex, 1980; Chomsky, 1971; Graves, 1978).

An Overview of Research Studies into the Writing Process

Many claims are made concerning the benefits which accrue when children are allowed to write utilizing the writing process approach. Temple, Nathan & Burris state that "Even when they are not taught about writing, most children make essentially the same discoveries about it in essentially the same order" (1982, p.2). Many similar claims are made for the benefits of the process writing approach, claims which are usually accompanied by a vigorous attack on traditional methods. However, at this point in time there is not an abundance of data which supports the claim that children in Grade One who learn to write using the process approach do in fact improve as writers in comparison to children who are taught according to traditional practices. What research there is tends to extol the progress made by the children without any clear reference to what should be expected from the children in terms of writing achievement.

In a study conducted by Lee Dobson (1982) into the development of writing abilities of students in a Grade One classroom, the researcher allowed the 28 children in the class to write freely for 40 minutes, 4 times a week on topics chosen by the children themselves. From the first day of school children were allowed to use their own perceptions of written English to represent their meanings, and the children were allowed to draw if they had no conception of print. In conferences with the children the researcher accepted and reponded only to the students' attempt to convey meaning. There was no attempt made to overtly correct the surface "errors" in the students' work.

Dobson observed that the children's progression in writing moved on a "continuum toward closer approximations of written English, ... (and) ... that each stage the students passed through represented an advance in the children's level of conceptualization" (1982, p.9). As far as their development as writers was concerned, he found that "The originality and fluency of their later work was well above the standard assumed for the children at this grade level"(1982, p.9). Unfortunately Dobson does not detail what these specific "standards" are, or how he assessed the merits of the writing produced by the students in the study. He does describe in very general terms what was conceived of as "above standard" writing. "After 5 months of daily writing practice, 27 of 28 children were producing well-spaced, readable work, although the reader still needed to use context clues to penetrate the functional spellings and misplaced word boundries" (Dobson, 1982, p. 12). As a footnote, he reports that the number of children referred for learning assistance was reduced by 75 percent. No details are given as to what kind of remedial help the students were referred for; it must be assumed that less students from this class needed remedial reading (or writing) help than in previous years.

In a similar study, Vernon Smith (1984) looked at the development of writing abilities of 49 children in Grade One classes in two schools. Students were allowed to write using similar principles to those outlined in the Dobson study. Smith looked at the growth in the students' writing abilities according to five dimensions:

1. General impression (determined by holistic scoring);
2. Length (number of words used);
3. Vocabulary (the number of different words used);
4. Spelling (the proportion of words correct);
5. Syntactic development (number of T units and the number of words/T unit).

Although he found that there were distinct day by day variations in the amount of text produced by the children, he did find that the children made gains in all of the areas which he examined. Based on the findings of his study, Smith claims that "No teacher nor parent, no matter how well meaning, can teach beginning writing as effectively and efficiently as children are teaching themselves" (Smith, 1984, p.9). Another conclusion that he reached was that all children can learn to write naturally provided that they have opportunities to interact with the written language in their environment. Overall, Smith suggested that "Since children in the first grade are already writing and are all learning to write right, the role of the teacher is not to teach beginning writing rather it is to nurture beginning writers" (1984, p. 34).

One of the strengths of Smith's study is that it set up specific criteria for measuring the students' development as writers. Unfortunately, as with Dobson's study, there were no comparative data collected from other classrooms using a different approach to the teaching of writing. There is little longitudinal research available from classrooms which have used traditional methods of writing instruction on the development of children's writing according to the factors outlined by Smith; thus, it is difficult to assess the gains which the children made in the study.

Some of the shortcomings of the previous studies were overcome in a "longitudinal descriptive investigation which incorporated ethnographic techniques" conducted by Brenda Wilucki (1984) which looked at the development of written language of 18 children in two kindergarten classrooms whose teachers held differing ideologies concerning the teaching of writing. Based substantially on the premise set forth by Harste and Burke (1976) that theoretical orientations to written language govern transactions between teachers and students, Wilucki identified two classes, one in which the teacher held a "mechanics/skills" (M/S) orientation and another whose teacher held a "communication/whole language " (C/WL) orientation. The teachers' orientations were identified based on their responses to the DeFord Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile, and the McCully Perceptions of Literacy Development: A Teacher Interview. The major question which Wilucki asked concerned the impact which the teachers' theoretical orientation had on the writing development of the students in her classroom.

Using student interviews, classroom observations and videotape recordings, Wilucki drew several conclusions about each teacher's approach to the teaching of writing. She concluded that the teacher's instructional practices were consistent with their ideological positions regarding literacy development to the extent that "The teacher's theoretical position in the M/S classroom appeared to restrict the range of writing processes used by the students. In the C/WL classroom, however, the range of writing behaviors accepted and encouraged was much greater" (1984, p.77).

A major conclusion drawn from this study concerned, not only the beliefs that the teachers held about literacy and the development of writing abilities, but also the effect that these beliefs had upon teacher practice and student outcomes.

> Children in the M/S classroom generally listened to teacher instruction about letter shapes and sounds and direction for content. The children have learned to write graphically conventional letters and words.

> Subjects in the C/WL classroom, however, learned different writing processes altogether. These children have learned to write their messages the best way they can with some assistance from others if necessary, re-read what was written to themselves, and share the message of their completed product with others. The primary focus of their written language events was meaning - in the sharing of a message. (1984, pp.76-77)

The conclusions reached by this research lend tentative support to some of the arguments put forth by the process proponents against traditional writing instructional practices. Wilucki suggests that although the children given instruction based on a traditional "mechanics/skills" belief system are developing some form of writing abilities, they are not those which are conducive to the development of those abilities which are demanded in the majority of writing situations, the communication of the writer's ideas.

Probably the most intensive studies into what children do during the writing process have been conducted by Donald Graves and his associates at the University of New Hampshire. Graves and his team of researchers have reported extensively on the results of their research which has primarily involved a "living in classrooms" approach. Highly critical of conventional experimental research designs, Graves and his team have spent extended periods in classrooms working with, and observing teachers and students engaged in the writing process (Calkins, 1983; Cordeiro, Giacobbe, & Cazden, 1983; Graves, 1984).

The process which Graves has observed in primary grades has been one in which "Six-year olds choose topics on their own, rehearse information, write, re-read what they have written and revise" (Graves, 1984, p. 169). Through this process the children in the studies have mastered the conventional aspects of writing (handwriting, spelling, punctuation, grammar, and story structure), while simultaneously exhibiting growth in independence, self-confidence and ability to take risks in any new language situation. The role of the teacher throughout this process is not to act as a teacher in the traditional sense, but more often as a trusted confidante, who can talk to the student in "conference" situations. As Graves describes this role, "The teacher leads the writer to discover new combinations of personal thought, to develop the sense of knowing and authority so valuable to any learner. Indeed, the main job of the teacher is to help the students know what they know" (1984, p. 72). In this context the teacher is a fellow learner, listening, following and observing the writers "in order to steer their craft into greater clarity" (Graves, 1984, p. 84).

The conference is seen as the central component of the writing process. No longer do the teachers wait for a finished written product before responding to the children's writing. In the "conference-process" model described by Graves, the teacher listens to the child read his writing, picking up valuable clues as to the strategies which the writer is using in coming to grips with his topic. In this way the teacher is in a position to respond immediately and directly to what the child is trying to say in his writing, and the child retains the ownership of the piece of writing. In Graves' estimation, "The focal point for developing self-critical powers in the young writer is the writing conference" (1984, p.49). This sentiment is echoed by Calkins who states, "The writing teacher takes lessons from children and, in doing so, helps them know what they know. If it seems I am talking of content conferences in elevated terms, this is as it should be. They are at the heart of teaching writing" (1986, p. 124).

Thus, the claims made by Graves and his associates as to the benefits of allowing children to write in the process writers' workshop go far beyond the measurable and comparable aspects of writing. What they claim is that these burgeoning writers develop the capacity to think as writers think, to write and compose in the manner of real writers, to share their ideas with spontaneity and confidence, to respond to other writers with warmth and empathy, and to regard writing, not as an assortment of exercises and drills, but as an activity which is a natural outgrowth of their inherent right as language users. This is probably best summarized in the comment a child made when asked by Graves "Why do you write?" The student responded,

> You learn about yourself. You can learn that -maybe you've had a really tough day and everything - and nothing seems to be going right. And you think, "I can't do anything," you know. "Nothing's mine." well, your writing is, you know. It's up to you whenever you want to do it or not, really. (Graves, 1984, p. 170)

The type of longitudinal descriptive research described by Graves indicates that children who are part of process oriented classrooms do indeed develop all of the "skills" traditionally taught to children, but in a different context. The added dimension in the process writing orientation concerns the value to the students in terms of personal growth, not only as writers, but as users of language in general.

In both of these orientations, traditional skills and process, there is an underlying belief system which goes beyond methodology and classroom practice. Each of these orientations contains explicit and implicit beliefs about the nature and purpose of education and, of more importance, about the individual and his role in society. Thus, the ideologies which underlie these two approaches to writing are examined in the next section.

Ideologies Underlying the Writing Curriculum

The Traditional Skills Ideology

The major thrust of this study is to examine the ideology which underlies, surrounds and dictates the teaching of writing in Grade One. An ideology may be conceived of as a set of explicit and implicit beliefs which surround, support and guide practice. In Mosenthal's terms, "An ideology is a world view of what should be the goal of a particular enterprise" (1983, p.38). If we take into account the fact that a teacher's world view encompasses a personal belief system which has been developed through experience as well as those of the culture which supports the educational system of which the teacher is a part, then the examination of a teacher's ideology can be seen to be a complex enterprise.

The personal beliefs that teachers hold play a role in determining the methods which the teacher will use to achieve instructional goals (Harste et al., 1984; Harootunian, 1982). In many cases they will reflect commonly accepted educational beliefs, for example, "time on task" is an important factor in student learning. Teachers may also incorporate certain idiosyncratic beliefs into their ideologies. These beliefs may be based on successful or unsuccessful personal experiences, for example, a belief that the memorization of poetry is a good character builder and that all students should be exposed to this practice. Thus, it can be seen that many educational practices and curriculum decisions are dependent on the personal theories of learning which the teacher has developed. Immersed as she is in the practical realities of education, the teacher may not be aware, however, of the social and political forces which underlie, and in many instance direct, educational practice. When the traditional Grade One writing "curriculum" is viewed in the context of the societal ideology which surrounds it, the restrictions placed upon the teacher to guide and develop the curriculum become more readily apparent. Unfortunately, more often than not, teachers are unaware of the impact which this ideology has upon their freedom to develop curriculum in their classrooms.

Thus, any discussion of beliefs about writing and writing instruction in Grade One must, of necessity take into account the socio-political context of all educational practice. In fact, Michael Apple has claimed that "In order to understand complex issues ... (in education) ... we need to step back from thinking about schools as places which seek to maximize the achievement of students" (1983, p.5). There are other critical theorists who echo this sentiment. The purpose of schools, they claim, is not educational, but political (Anyon, 1980; Freire, 1970; Giroux, 1983). Their major contention is that the primary goal of education is not to "develop competencies in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing" (Alberta Program of Studies, 1982, p.v), but to ensure that students "acquire knowledge and develop skills, attitudes and habits required to respond to the opportunities and expectations of the world of work" (Alberta Program of Studies, 1982, p. v). Thus, the claim is made that school curricula by almost insidious design are not aimed at the development of individual learning, but rather at the fulfillment of the political and social needs of an elite segment of society who control and direct it.

The contention put forth by writers who are critical of traditional school practices (Apple & Weiss, 1983; Giroux, 1983) is that education is dominated by the need to perpetuate the capitalist economic and political system. In order to survive, they claim, the system must have an unlimited supply of workers whose major attribute is the ability to persevere at monotonous tasks over extended periods of time. Training for these roles begins in school. Production line methods are rehearsed and practiced in the school, and production line mentality is instilled in children from their first encounters with learning. Teachers become the unwitting contributors to, and perpetuators of a system which portrays the art of teaching of a mechanistic program which reduces learning to its "component parts," never allowing children to see or grasp the "whole" of the enterprise. Teachers' actions are controlled and directed externally, and, unfortunately, they are unaware that they are. As Connors points out, "many of education's current practices are oppressive, not through any deliberate attempt on the part of educators, but rather that the perspective is embedded in the society" (1982, p.111). An examination of the traditional Grade One writing curriculum provides some support for the validity of these contentions.

The essential component of the curriculum is the belief that writing is something that is taught by teachers to students through a series of clearly identified and quantifiable skills which are learned through drill and practice. As a curriculum it is remarkably behavioral. Students are required to progress through a sequence of activities, which are implemented (though most often not prepared), monitored and evaluated by the teacher. Writing, which had once been play (Harste et al., 1984), becomes work done in workbooks and on worksheets; the major success indicator for the teacher and the children being the student's ability to complete the writing task in an accurate and orderly fashion in the alloted time. As students develop completion competencies, they are rewarded by the teacher with stars, stickers and ultimately, grades. As Nancy King points out, the integral part of such work is the need for the student to develop "the belief in the meaningfulness of an external reward system and a desire to excel" (in Apple & Weiss, 1983, p.262). Ultimately, King concludes, "... not only do such skills help children succeed in classrooms, but they will also help children succeed as adult workers." The emphasis for teachers and students is placed on the external features of language, and children spend the majority of their early writing experiences doing drills in eye-hand coordination activities, tracing and copying letters and words, overwriting, underwriting and copying sentence patterns. In fact, according to Donald Graves, "so much time is devoted to blocking and tackling drills that there is often no time to play the real game, writing" (1983, p.65). But, many theorists would claim, the intent of such a curriculum is not to develop writing at all; the exercises are primarily designed to be part of the "child's training to be a successful member of the adult workforce" (King in Apple & Weiss, 1983, p.262).

The ideology contained in this curriculum is essentially reductivist; that is, it assumes that the parts are equal to the whole, and that by breaking the process of writing into discrete elements learning to write is somehow simplified and, thus, made easier. This is the assembly line view of language development, wherein the lessons which have been learned from mass production methodes used in industry are conceived of as being readily applicable to learning in classrooms. The underlying belief of this system is that each variable in the writing experience can be broken out, analyzed in isolation, and reassembled later once the children understand how they work (Harste et al., 1984).

Michael Apple (1983) has suggested that this type of curriculum reflects the "deskilling-reskilling" process which became the essential component of the industrial revolution. It is a processs by which the capitalist society ensures that workers lose personal skills, skills usually associated with the creation of complex products by craftsmen, only to have them replaced with those skills necessary to perpetuate the industrial complex. In deskilling "relatively complex jobs, jobs which require no small amount of skill and decision-making ... (are broken) ... down into specified actions with specified results ... so that control of the work pace and outcome is enhanced" (Apple, 1983, p.147). The skills lost in this process are replaced by those which are most appropriate to achieving the goals of the industrial complex, namely, the ability to persist in monotonous, repetitive tasks over an extended period of time. Craftspeople were thus reduced to technicians who operated at a substantially lower skill level on tasks which were governed by rules, procedures and standardized outcomes.

As craftspeople are deskilled and reskilled so are students and teachers. In many ways the growth of instructional packages and "teacher proof" curriculum materials has contributed to the deskilling of teachers, and their ultimate loss of control over their curriculum (Anyon, 1980). The key component of these curriculum packages is the pre-planned concise sequence of skill development which requires little of the teacher except for strict implementation according to the procedures set forth in the manuals and guides which accompany the programs. Management, control, and effectiveness now become the focussing elements of the teacher's classroom performance, and, what was once conceived of as the teacher's craft, the art of curriculum deliberation and planning based on students' needs, is replaced by techniques for better controlling students in order that they may complete the prescribed task. "Teacher effectiveness" becomes a measure of how well the teacher can read the directions on the curriculum package, how effectively he or she can keep the students on the assigned task, and ultimately, how well student learning can be objectified so that it can be measured and reported to those who control the educational system. The results of such practices are:

> As the activities of students are increasingly specified, as the rules, processes and standard outcomes are integrated through and rationalized by the materials themselves, so to are teachers deskilled, reskilled and made anonymous. (Apple, 1983, p.159)

The charge that these theorists is making is that the dominant ideology of this curriculum is conformity for the students and anonymity for the teachers. In many ways the curriculum traditionally presented to children in Grade One reflects the needs of society and its industrial complex to produce, through its educational system, a standardized work force which is prepared to accept without question the mind-numbing routines which are the essential component of the modern workplace. The Grade One teacher may "believe" that traditional writing practices are based on well thought out and sound pedagogy. They may also believe that research supports the practices as particularly efficacious, little realizing that experimental methods typically used in writing research, by breaking down and examining the minutae of the writing process, have done as much to perpetuate the reductivist tradition as they have to advance an understanding of the writing process (Graves, 1984).

Theorists who are critical of accepted educational practice would maintain that the traditional writing curriculum is, by design and definition, rooted in the political ideology of the society which produced it. In looking at the beliefs which teachers bring to the development of the Grade One writing curriculum, it is important that the influence of the dominant cultural ideology be taken into account. For often teachers who are guided by the best of intentions for their children are so immersed in the day by day classroom considerations that they cannot be aware of the ideological forces which direct them.

The Process Ideology

The foregoing discussion of the ideology underlying the traditional writing curriculum, has suggested that the strong positivistic emphasis of this curriculum is based substantially on a socio-political ideology which removes the freedom to develop the curriculum from the individual teacher and places it in the hands of powerful segments of the society. In many ways the process approach represents a reaction to this traditional thrust. Little has been written to suggest that there is a pre-meditated effort on the part of the pro-process writing school to actively develop, in an existential sense, the power of the individual teacher and student to make choices, but this theme and the concomitant ideas of responsibility and freedom do dominate substantially the writing in this area.

When the process writing movement is placed in the larger social and political context in which all education operates (Apple, 1983, as noted previously), the themes of self-realization, choice and liberation become readily apparent. In this respect the work of Carl Rogers is echoed to a large extent in the writings of Donald Graves, and many of the theoretical positions espoused by the proponents of the process approach reflect the concerns raised by Rogers about the goals of education. A cursory examination of Rogers' beliefs gives an indication of the extent to which many of his ideas are paralleled in the beliefs espoused by Donald Graves and the process writing movement.

Rogers' belief that "human beings are primed with potential for self-realization, and they are endowed genetically with an actualizing tendency to grow and create" (Meyers,1981, pp. 3-4), led him to be extremely critical of the traditional pedagogy he observed in schools. The traditional educational system, with its prescribed curriculum, teacher-centered instruction, group teaching techniques, standardized expectations and outcomes for all students, and lecture as the major mode of instruction led him to conclude that "we can almost guarantee that meaningful learning will be at an absolute minimum" (Rogers, 1969, p.5). What Rogers refers to as meaningful learning hinges on the concepts of choice, responsibility, and control. In the traditional teaching of writing, every aspect of the curriculum is chosen and dictated by agencies outside the student. It is a system which claims to develop independent work habits for the students while in practical application it creates the exact opposite. Very early in their school careers, students learn to become dependent upon the teacher for all of the major components of any writing act. Teachers establish the need to write, the time when writing takes place, what should be written and how it should be done, the audience for whom it should be written, and finally, how the writing should be judged (Graves, 1984). In this context it becomes extremely difficult for the student to "assume responsibility ... for assessing and giving form to his or her life" (Meyers, 1981, p.3). Graves (1984) suggests that what is developed in classrooms is a "writing welfare system," a system in which the teacher, often unknowingly, controls all phases of the students' writing development and the students surrender all decision making to the teacher. "Eventually the only question remaining for children is, 'What do teachers want?'" (Graves, 1984, p. 44).

Rogers suggests that this system, a hangover from the scientific determinism which pervades traditional teaching practices, is based on the belief that man is "unfree," that he is "controlled, that such words as purpose, choice, commitment have no significant meaning, that man is nothing more than an object which we can more fully understand and more fully control" (Rogers, 1969, p.275). In order to counter this pervasive notion, Rogers maintains that the first step is to return to the student the responsibility for his or her own learning, so that the learning which evolves has "the quality of personal involvement - the whole person in both his feeling and cognitive aspects being in the event. It is self-initiated" (Rogers, 1969, p.5). According to Meyers, the aim of a Rogerian writing pedagogy would be "... to help people become more autonomous, more spontaneous, and more confident users of written language" (1981, p.12). When this thought is viewed in the context of the writing process set forth by Graves, the response takes the form of questions in which he asks:

> How can we help children retain control of their language and develop the powers to evaluate what has been written?
> How can a foundation for self-criticism be developed that will be consistent with effective writing at all ages? (Graves, 1984, p.45)

One of the answers according to Graves is to make children aware that they are indeed in control of their own writing, as this classroom exchange outlined by Calkins illustrates:

> I sometimes begin a mini-lesson by asking children, "Who is the boss of your book? Who makes the decisions?" Once we establish that each child is the boss of his or her own writing, I ask, "Who decides whether you will write with pencil or marker?"
> "We do!"
> After a series of such questions, I come to the crucial question, "Who decides how you spell a word ...?"
> "You do!" the children will often answer, which gives me a chance to tell them that no, *they* are the boss of their spelling, and they must not come to me for spelling decisions. (1986, p. 175)

The central theme of this exchange is that children must be made aware that writing involves a continual stream of decisions, and that, from the outset, the ultimate responsibility for those decisions must rest with the writer. As Meyers points out, "As Rogerians we must help our students to make choices and to live with the consequences of their choices, both the mistaken ones and the sound ones" (1981, p.7). Thus, the observations which Graves has made about the writing processes used by beginning writers has indicated the necessity for the children to make all of the major decisions about their writing. In stressing that Grade One children "choose topics on their own, rehearse information, write, re-read what they have written, and revise" (Graves, 1984, p.169), Graves is echoing Rogers' call for the development of language users who are autonomous, spontaneous, and confident.

Rogers' contention that freedom involves not only choice but the ability to accept the consequences (good and bad) of that choice contrasts starkly with traditional practices in which, to all intents and purposes, no real choice exists, the curriculum and its path being predetermined long before it reaches the children. Under such a curriculum there is no element of risk, the instructional sequences are set forth according to clearly identified procedures and specified outcomes, the students have to simply fit into them. However, " ... for Rogers, risk-taking is the *sine qua non* of the person who is free, ... (and therefore) ... we must free up as many opportunities for our students to take risks, even if it means that they will 'fail' now and then" (Meyers1981, p.7). A similar notion, that risk-taking on the part of students as they enter the writing situation must be encouraged, is pervasive throughout the work of Graves and his associates. Writing, and particularly beginning writing, they maintain, requires confidence on the part of the writers that what they have to say will be accepted by a receptive and understanding audience, and confidence on the part of the teacher that the students have something worth writing about (Calkins, 1986). The trust that is built between the teacher, the students, and their peers is the foundation upon which students will build any future tendency to take risks with their writing (Calkins, 1986).

Rogers also has much to say which relates directly to the idea of the writing conference being the central component of the writing process. In the conference writers are challenged by the teacher and their peers to support and explain their ideas. Through this process children are encouraged to re-vise what they have written, to look over it to see if they can make new discoveries about themselves and their writing. The teacher's role is to help children to speak first, to help them find their voices, to ask questions of the writers which will allow them to speak of what they know, at the same time allowing them to retain control and ownership of the piece of writing. In Graves' terms, "The teacher who conducts conferences has a strong appetite for learning, both about the information which the child shares and what such facts reveal about the child and how he writes" (Graves, 1983, p.100). This type of procedure follows two of the major principles set forth by Rogers. In the first place, it allows the teacher to individualize instruction because the teacher is responding to the child's voice as it appears in his writing, and secondly the teacher, through the questioning process, is allowing the writer to develop the responsibility for the revision of his own ideas. As Meyers notes, "It is safe to say, from a Rogerian perspective, ... that it is nearly always preferable to invite revision by posing a question than decreeing a command" (1981, p.7).

Thus, in the Rogerian scheme, the major theme of schooling should be that man is indeed "free," that through choice and concomitantly responsibility, students can develop their potential to live creative and fulfilling lives (Meyers, 1981). These would appear to be the central themes expressed throughout the writings of Graves and his associates. The goal of the writing process, as they outline it, is as much a concern for the development of the student as a "free" individual as it is for the development of the student's ability to write. For Rogers, any approach to writing should have as "Its foremost consideration ... that each student attain his or her own self-directed, free voice, one whose distinctiveness can be made manifest in the written word" (Meyers, 1981, p.12). This sentiment is echoed by Graves who believes that not only does writing develop intelligence, courage, initiative and intelligence, but more importantly, "Writing is most important not as etiquette, not even as a tool, but as a contribution to the development of a person, no matter what that person's background and talents" (Graves, 1984, p.63).

Summary and Implications for the Study

The major themes emerging from this review of the literature can be summarized as follows:

The definition of writing varies according to the theoretical orientation which the teacher brings to the writing situation. A "traditional skills" orientation suggests that writing is viewed as a collection of component skills, and writing competency is viewed mainly in terms of the surface features of the writing. In contrast a "process" orientation emphasizes the meaning which the writer is trying to communicate through his or her writing. Emphasis falls on the ideas which are developed through the writing process, and competency is viewed in terms of the writer's ability to organize, develop and express ideas with vigor and clarity.

Teachers who use a traditional skills approach to the development of writing abilities in Grade One are likely to emphasize the development of motor skills as readiness activities, tracing and copying as pre-writing activities, and error free products as the goal of writing. There is also a clearly defined sequence of skill development which is taught using workbooks and worksheets. The teacher's role in this orientation is to develop motivational writing assignments, to evaluate them in terms of set standards, and then to provide feedback to the students as to the relative correctness of the finished product. The underlying belief is that students learn to write by practicing the component skills of writing in order that they may put them together in some form of connected discourse at a later stage.

Teachers and researchers who subscribe to the process approach argue that the "skills to writing" approach is unnatural in terms of what is known about children's language development, and maintain that it may be detrimental to the development of real writing abilities. Based on research which has looked at the ~~literacy~~ development that most children bring to school, process people believe that initial writing experiences should build upon the natural inclination that children have to write. Thus, the major contention is that beginning writers should be "nurtured " by providing them with a setting which allows them to write first without any overt interference presented by traditional teaching methods. In the initial stages, the mechanics of written language should be totally ignored and response made only to the ideas which are expressed. This allows children to develop as writers in the same way that they develop as speakers. Underlying the process approach is the contention that children can learn to write without direct instruction if they are given adequate opportunity to write, and then to discuss their writing with the teacher and their peers.

Research into the validity of the claims made by process proponents has tended to use longitudinal, descriptive techniques to describe the effectiveness of the programs. Because of the claim that the writing process must be viewed holistically, experimental designs which manipulate isolated variables are not suited to research into the writing process. Thus, few comparative studies have been reported. Findings of the longitudinal studies indicate that children do develop as writers, often far in excess of the achievement expected of them in traditional writing programs. Very few attempts have been made to conduct studies which examine the relative development of writing abilities according to the belief systems under which Grade One teachers teach writing. However, one study into teacher beliefs about writing and their effect on writing development in kindergarten indicated that teacher's beliefs do affect the kind of writing which is produced in the classrooms.

The suggestion that teachers' classroom practices are theoretically based is substantially supported in the literature. There is also the suggestion that the ideology which underlies the traditional writing program is based substantially on the need for society to maintain and perpetuate the social, political and economic order which characterizes the capitalist system. In contrast, the process approach would appear to be based on an ideology which has as its major goal the freedom of the individual to make choices. The practices and learning environment proposed by the process movement are designed specifically to allow for the unencumbered "natural"development of the child as a writer and as an individual. Writing is perceived as the vehicle for the full development of the child and not as an end in itself as it has been in traditional programs.

Where process writing contains themes of potentiality, choice and freedom, traditional writing progrrams appear to stress conformity, reliance and standardization. It is obvious, therefore, that any examination of beginning writing must take the ideological position of the teacher as its starting point.

Chapter 3

THE DESIGN OF THE STUDY

This chapter describes the the two major components of the study design. The first component details the design and development of the survey instrument used in the study. In doing so, it provides a rationale for using a survey instrument to detect the beliefs which teachers hold about writing and an overview of studies which have attempted to use surveys and questionnaires as indicators of what teachers believe about writing and the teaching of writing. It then outlines the stages of the development of the survey instrument, Theoretical Orientation to Writing Profile (TOWP). This encompasses the generation of the initial survey items and the procedures used to refine those items. Details of how the survey was piloted, the item verification procedures used, and the refinement procedures leading to the development of the final draft are included.

The second component of the study design describes the teacher sample, the data collection procedures, the return rate, and the method used to generate and collect the children's writing samples. Finally, it details the procedures used in the analysis of the writing samples.

The Survey Instrument

Rationale for Using Ideology as a Research Paradigm

In his review of the research into the development of children's writing competence, Mosenthal reaches the conclusion that, "The major reason why few adequate answers have been forthcoming is that this research has been conducted in the absence of any leading paradigms of writing" (1983, p.26). By this he means that, because there are few mutually agreed upon critieria for describing writing, it is very difficult to test hypotheses about writing and writing acquisition. Mosenthal's point is that a major problem with writing research has been that, in talking about writing, researchers have based their definitions on differing ideologies. In order to address this problem, Mosenthal suggests that descriptive definitions of writing should be developed by examining the ideology which underlies the development of that writing. These descriptive definitions would form the basis for an examination of the writing which is generated according to a particular instructional ideology.

A major problem with developing a descriptive definition of writing from a particular ideological perspective is that the complexity of such a definition would essentially prove too cumbersome to verify in operational terms. Thus, Mosenthal develops the idea of a "partial specification" which means essentially that,

> The ideal here is to specify just enough features and examples so that the partially specified definition closely approximates the fully specified descriptive definition; also enough features should be specified to ensure veridicality with the real-world phenomenon that the concept is said to represent. (Mosenthal, 1983, p. 34)

Based on this definition, Mosenthal provides partial specification for five ideologies which he believes underlie the teaching of writing:

1. The Academic Ideology - "The goal is to pass on from one generation to the next the knowledge, skills and moral values of the culture that previous generations

deemed important for succeeding generations to acquire" (p.39). Thus, a series of grammars prescribe what writing competencies are to be passed on. Writing competency is assessed by comparing "what children write with what children should write" (p.39). One assumption arising from this ideology is that there are set writing standards which children must conform to at various stages of their school careers if they are to be classed as competent writers.

2. The Utilitarian Ideology. Where the academic ideology stresses "cultural reproduction," the goal of the utilitarian ideology is to "pass on from one generation to the next the knowledge and skills necessary for survival in real-life situations" (p.41). The task in writing is usually defined in terms of its utility, such as, "writing one's signature, letter writing, or filling out a job application" (p.41). Since these tasks are those that stress the conventional appearance of the writing, it is safe to assume that the emphasis of the writing instruction falls on the development and refinement of the writing skills.

3. The Romantic Ideology. The goal here is "to develop the individual's autonomy, self-worth, or self-ownership" (p.42). The writing task is usually defined in terms of the writer's context and "how the writer uses his background knowledge to solve problems dealing with his topic" (p.42). The emphasis of the writing instruction based on this ideology will fall on the expression of ideas and the response of the teacher will be in terms of what the writer is trying to say in his writing.

4. The Cognitive Development Ideology. The goal here is to "nourish the child's natural interaction with a developing society or environment" (p.44). Writing competence under this ideology is based on the notion that children pass through various ability stages. Writing products are described in terms of the relative maturity of the writing by using devices such as "T-unit" analysis. An assumption derived from this ideology would be that writing concepts cannot be forced upon the child if the child is not ready; thus, writing instruction should be structured to allow for the natural evolvement of the child's writing abilities.

5. The Emancipatory Ideology. Under this ideology the goal is "to change the educational, social and political structure so that the oppressed may forge a new, more egalitarian relationship with the oppressors" (p.48). Under the terms of this ideology, teacher expectations for student achievement play a deciding role in the type of writing which is produced. Although elements of the first four ideologies described by Mosenthal are present in many teaching practices, it is difficult to ascribe any particular instructional strategy to the fifth. What he appears to be describing is a particular philosophical aim of writing rather than a "partial specification" of an writing theory.

In reviewing Mosenthal's five ideological specifications it is obvious that there are overlaps, and it can be concluded that, unless the ideology is very narrowly defined, specifications from one ideology are likely to appear in another. However, the idea of providing partial specifications for a particular writing ideology does furnish a framework for relating writing instruction to the writing which is produced by students. Teachers' beliefs are a composite of theories and assumptions which have been developed over their educational carreers, both as teacher and student. In developing the partial specifications for an ideology, it must be kept in mind that the broader the ideological classification, the more specifications will constitute that ideology.

Thus, elements of both the academic and utilitarian ideologies appear in the "traditional skills" orientation described in Chapter 2 of this study. When these beliefs are coupled with conventional wisdom, the concerns of publishing companies, and the practical considerations of the classroom routine, a broad ideological stance which has been classed as the traditional skills approach to writing is created.

In a similar fashion, elements of the romantic and cognitive development ideologies are present in the process approach to writing. Whereas the underlying concern in the traditional skills approach appears to be for the writing to meet broad societal goals (as was discussed in Chapter 2), the concern of the process approach is much more the development of the innate potential of the individual child. Thus, the process ideology appears to encompass the philosophical and psychological goals outlined in a child-centered curriculum.

In summary, it can be seen that any attempt to describe the partial specifications of either of these ideologies must, by definition, eliminate some of the features of the ideology. Given this admonition, the partial specifications for the two broadly classified ideologies described in this study follow.

Partial Specifications of the Orientations Used in the Study

Traditional Skills. Writing is viewed as much as a social obligation as it is the need to communicate ideas. There is an emphasis on convention and the appearance of the writing and, as in the academic ideology, the writing standards and expectations are pre-set by external authorities. Thus, workbooks and worksheets provide a sequence of skill development to which all of the children are exposed. This skill development takes priority in the program, and the teacher's role is to guide the students through the skills and to teach them, through drill and practice, how to move closer to accepted standards in their writing. Included in these skills are a concern for correctness in letter formation, neatness, spelling, grammar, punctuation, and usage; so much so that they are sometimes taught as school "subjects" in and of themselves. When students do engage in writing tasks, it is most often to reproduce a "model" provided by the teacher or the workbook. Later, once they have acquired some of the basic skills, the students will write about a motivational topic provided by the teacher or the workbook authors. The traditional Grade One writing curriculum is typically constructed around a set of skills which the children have to master before proceeding on to the next grade. Thus, an inability to print correctly, or a high incidence of letter reversals, or poor spelling performance often earns the student a referral for remedial help, and, where the problems are perceived as chronic, the child may be retained until he or she has mastered the basic skills. Underlying this ideology is the conception that children must be taught the separate skills of writing before being allowed to write. Ultimately ,they must master the parts before moving on to the whole.

Process. This ideology emphasizes the natural development of the writer. From the outset children are encouraged to represent their ideas on paper in the best way they know how at the time. The teacher's response to the writer is always to the content of the writing. Writing is not viewed as apart from the language environment of the child, but as an integral part of it. As such, all language interactions which the child has are thought to contribute to the development of writing competency. The particular emphasis of these interactions is on the talking which the child does before, during and after the writing. These "conferences" have as their aim the development of the writers' ability to reflect upon and revise the ideas in their writing. In this context the writers make choices, not only about the way the ideas are to be expressed, but also the way they will be represented so that they will be clear to the intended audience.

Writing skills develop as the child writes, as he or she sees the need for them; thus, writing instruction is perceived of as being holistic and meaning based. Risk-taking is encouraged and the emergent writer is encouraged to freely develop the direction which his or her writing will take. As writing instruction is student-centered, the teacher's role is to facilitate and encourage the process. At the end of Grade One there is an expectation that students will be able to choose their own topics, to take risks with the expression of their ideas and with linguistic conventions, and to comprehend that writing has a purpose and is an intended audience. Emphasis is on holistic development of the child's writing first, with the assumption that the parts will be developed during the process.

A Review of Studies into Teacher Beliefs

> The things people say about themselves and other people should be taken seriously as reports of data relevant to phenomena that really exist and which are releveant to behavior.
>
> (Harre and Secord, quoted in Harootunian, 1982)

In an effort to divine teachers' beliefs about instruction, researchers have used a variety of procedures. In one procedure teachers were asked to discuss the decisions that they made during instruction, and the researcher-interviewer tried to identify the beliefs upon which the teachers' decisions were founded (Conners, 1978; Marland, 1977). In a variation of this procedure, the researcher's observations of the teacher's instructional practices formed the basis for a series of interview questions. Using the data obtained from these interviews, the researcher then attempted to discern the beliefs which the teacher held (Spodek, 1984).

Questionnaires have been used to identify teachers' beliefs about the reading process and reading instruction (Barr and Duffy, 1978; DeFord, 1979). They have also been used at various levels to gain an indication of teachers' attitudes and beliefs about writing and writing instruction. One example is the "Composition Opinionnaire" which was designed by a committee of the National Council of Teachers of English in order to "sample the salient dimensions in the instruction of writing" (Gere, Schuessler & Abbott, 1981, p. 349). This opinionnaire was designed to determine the attitudes of teachers of English (from elementary to university) to the teaching of written composition according to four scales:

- The importance of standard English,
- the importance of defining and evaluating written tasks,
- the importance of student self-expression,
- the importance of linguistic maturity.

Each scale contained ten statements about writing, for example, "Teachers should correct errors on students' papers." Teachers responded to the scale on the basis of agreement using a five point Likert scale.

The authors of this study found that specific "attitude to writing" groups of teachers were identified by the opinionnaire. They classified these groups as "nature" and "nurture." In describing the nurture or "interventionist" ideology they state that "priority

... (is placed) ... on teaching basic skills which the students lack, assuming that once students acquire control of such skills their written products will show marked improvement, whereas, the nature or "maturationist" ideology "emphasize(s) personal writing, writing centered on the experiences and emotions of the students and aimed at fostering personal growth" (Gere, Schuessler & Abbott, 1981, p.355-356). In their conclusion as to the efficacy of using a questionnaire as a research instrument, the authors point out that "this study demonstrates the complexity of investigating teacher attitudes toward composition, so it points to the importance of doing this kind of work" (Gere, Schuessler & Abbott, 1981, p.359).

Belinda Wilucki (1984) in her investigation of the "impact of teachers' orientation to literacy on children's developing concepts of written language in kindergarten" utilized the DeFord Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (TORP) to discriminate two distinct orientations to literacy. Using the TORP as a survey instrument, she found that she was able to identify two groups of teachers who operated from contrasting ideological bases.

DeFord's purpose in developing the Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (TORP) was to create an instrument which had the potential to indicate teachers' beliefs about reading and reading instruction (DeFord, 1985). In order to do this DeFord developed a 28 item survey containing 3 sub-scales which required teachers to respond to statements about reading and reading instruction according to a five-point Likert scale. The instrument was piloted and was "reviewed by professionals in the field prior to final rewrite" (DeFord, 1985, p.3). In order to validate the instrument, DeFord administered the TORP to 90 teachers, identified by administrators as having a specific theoretical orientation to reading . She found that teacher responses did reflect their theoretical orientation. The second step involved observing a group of teachers and having both the observer and the teacher respond to the TORP in terms of the teacher's orientation to reading instruction. The correlation of the teacher - observer beliefs was .859. The final step was to have supervisors of practicum teachers respond to the survey in terms of three specific orientations to reading. The comparison of the judges' responses revealed significant agreement. DeFord concluded that the TORP did differentiate, to the extent that three specific orientations to reading, "phonics, skills and whole language," could be identified from the profiles generated by the instrument.

In general, the findings of this research indicate that a survey questionnaire - opinionnaire instrument can be used to gain an indication of teachers' beliefs about reading and writing. However, at this point in time there is no instrument designed specifically to divine teachers' beliefs about beginning writing and writing instruction. A major thrust of the present study was to develop such a survey instrument. The key components in the development of the survey were the generation of statements based on the partial specification concept outlined by Mosenthal and the ability of those statements to clearly differentiate between the two theoretical orientations termed in this study, "process" and "traditional skills."

Development of the Survey Instrument

The following procedure was used to develop the survey instrument used in the generation of the " Theoretical Orientation to Writing Profile" (TOWP).

1. Instruments used to detect teachers' beliefs about reading and writing were examined in order to develop a preliminary set of statements about language development which might have the potential to indicate a teacher's orientation to writing. DeFord's (1979) Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile and Gere, Schuessler & Abbot's (1981) adaptation of the Composition Opinionnaire (NCTE, 1971) were identified as having the greatest potential, as they both provided a set of statements about language and writing which could be adapted to the requirements of the TOWP.
2. Statements and claims about writing and writing instruction gleaned from the literature were also examined in order to develop categorical statements which matched the ideologies.

3. Field data gathered through observations by the author of commonly accepted classroom practices pertaining to the teaching of writing were translated into statements.

The statements in DeFord's TORP related to a teacher's theoretical orientation to reading; however, several had the potential to be adapted to have application to beginning writing, which was the focus of the survey. For example, DeFord's statement, "It is not necessary to know the letters of the alphabet in order to read" was adapted to read "It is not necessary for Grade One children to know how to form letters before they begin to write." Similarly, an item from the Composition Opinionnaire, "Every error on a student's composition should be indicated" was adapted to read "One way to help Grade One writers develop skills is to point out to them the errors which they make in their writing." An example of a statement drawn from claims made in the literature was, "Teachers should model the writing process by writing with the students." This has not been a traditional practice in teaching writing in the early grades (in any grade for that matter), but the idea has received a great deal of support in recent literature (Calkins, 1985; Graves,1983; Smith,1983). Statements were also generated from the author's personal encounters with the writing practices in Grade One classrooms. As an example, teachers commonly start the "writing" class in Grade One with the direction, "Take out your pencils and erasers. We are going to have writing now." Recent research by Graves (1983) suggests that the flow of ideas from beginning writers is disjointed by the emphasis on correctness, and that the initial emphasis should be on setting down ideas rather than erasing words or letters because they appear incorrect to the writer. Hence the statement, "Students should be strongly discouraged from using erasers when they are first learning to write" was included in the initial draft.

Using this procedure an initial list of 74 items was generated. These items were then sorted by assigning them to the beliefs attributed to traditional skills or process orientations. A third group of twelve items was classified as ambiguous or "motherhood" i.e. statements which were unlikely to generate any disagreement from either orientation, for example, "The goal of Grade One writing instruction is to have the students write in realistic and meaningful situations." These were discarded. Through a process of cross referencing, items which repeated or simply restated the same idea in different terms were eliminated; some were combined and some were refined to in order to clarify the intent of the statement. For example, a statement in draft one, "Grade One children need to develop a spelling vocabulary of words that they can write correctly in order for them to feel confident that their writing is acceptable," was rephrased to become, "Teaching beginning writers to spell correctly is an important part of the Grade One writing program." As a result of this elimination and amalgamation process, a forty-one item scale was generated.

A preliminary draft of the survey instrument entitled Theoretical Orientation to Writing was distributed to a review committee consisting of five colleagues who had considerable experience in the field of language arts. This review committee included two Ph.Ds in language arts, both currently working in the field, an elementary principal , an elementary writing project coordinator, and a classroom teacher who has recognized expertise in the teaching of the writing process. Each was asked to respond to the survey which contained forty-one randomly ordered statements and utilized a Likert five point scale response continuum between the descriptors "Strongly Agree" and "Strongly Disagree" as polar positions. Accompanying the survey was a letter (Appendix A) which asked the committee to respond to the survey instument, and to comment on the relative clarity of the statements, the difficulty which a Grade One teacher may have in responding, and the ability of each item to differentiate between the two orientations.

Detailed responses from each member of the review committee were received. In most cases an item by item analysis was included, plus comments about terminology, phrasing, and the overall intent of the statements themselves. As a result of this initial test run of the survey, the following changes were made:

- items which did not elicit agreement or disagreement on the part of the majority of the committee were discarded.
- items in which the intent was perceived as being obscure were either rephrased or discarded.
- items which reiterated similar ideas or themes were either amalgamated or discarded.
- statements which contained too much information and had the potential to confuse the respondent were refined.
- superlatives were eliminated wherever possible.
- item redistribution was recommended to avoid the possibility of a "response set" dictating teachers' responses.

Through this process a third draft was produced which incorporated the major recommendations of the review committee. This draft contained a total of thirty items, fourteen of which were traditional skills and sixteen were process items (Appendix B). This draft of the survey was returned to the committee for response. They returned a consensus that the survey had the potential to differentiate the two ideological positions.

This document then became the pilot version which was distributed to eleven Grade One teachers who taught in jurisdictions separate from the one in which the final research was to be done. The survey, along with a letter explaining that the purpose of the survey was to "discern some of the beliefs which Grade One teachers hold about how children learn to write in their classrooms," was mailed to the teachers (Appendix C). They were asked to respond to the survey and to provide feedback regarding the clarity of the statements, and any other problems which they encountered. Anonymity was stressed. Seven responses were returned and one which did not respond directly to the survey but which contained an analysis of each item (return rate = 73 percent).

A detailed analysis of the returned surveys was conducted. A frequency distribution of the responses was tabulated (Table 1). On the basis of the item analysis,

Table 1

Responses of Teachers to Pilot Survey (n=7)

		SA 1	2	3	4	SD 5
ITEM	1	x	x	x	xxx	
	2				xxx	xxxx
	3		xx	xxx	x	x
	4		xxx	x	xx	x
	5			x	xxx	xxx
	6		xx	xx	xx	x
	7			x	xxx	xxx
	8			x	xx	xxxx
	9	xx	xx	xx		x
	10		x	xx	x	xxx
	11		xx	xx	xx	x
	12		x	xxx	xx	x
	13			x	xx	xxxx
	14		x	x	xx	xxx
	15	xxx	xxx	x		
	16		xx	xx		xxx
	17		x	x	xxx	xx
	18				xx	xxxxx
	19			xx	x	xxxx
	20	xx	xx	xxx		
	21				x	xxxxxx
	22		x	xx	xxx	x
	23				xxx	xxxx
	24			xx	xx	xxx
	25	xx	xxx	x	x	
	26	x	xx	xxx	x	
	27			xxx	xxxx	
	28		xxx	xxx		x
	29	xx	xxx	x	x	
	30		x	x	xx	xxx

the items which dealt with the teacher as writing model (item 2), the relationship between learning to talk and learning to write (item 13), the role of literature (item 21), and the need for an accepting atmosphere were deleted as these items did not clearly discriminate between the two orientations.

The remaining twenty-four items, with some minor wording changes recommended by the teachers in the pilot, comprised the Theoretical Orientation to Writing Profile (TOWP) . The instrument is included on pp.51-52.

Theoretical Orientation to Writing

Directions: The following statements are about children's early writing development in Grade One. Circle the response which best indicates the relationship of your feelings to the statement. Select the ONE best answer which reflects the strength of your agreement or disagreement on a continuum from SD (strongly disagree) through to SA (strongly agree).

1. A major writing problem that many beginning writers have is with letter reversals.	SD 1	2	3	4	SA 5
2. Orally sharing what they have written with other children helps beginning writers develop a sense of audience.	SD 1	2	3	4	SA 5
3. The teacher can help grade one students develop as writers by helping them with the spelling of words as they are writing.	SD 1	2	3	4	SA 5
4. The use of inter-lined paper is necessary because it helps beginning writers to understand that consistent letter size is an important part of the writing process.	SD 1	2	3	4	SA 5
5. The most important aspect of the grade one writing program should be the free expression of the students' ideas.	SD 1	2	3	4	SA 5
6. Developing the students' ability to print legibly should be an essential component of the beginning writing program.	SD 1	2	3	4	SA 5
7. Beginning writers should be encouraged to experiment with word spellings right from their first writing experience.	SD 1	2	3	4	SA 5
8. Creative drama and role playing contribute to the development of writing abilities of grade one students.	SD 1	2	3	4	SA 5
9. By circling or underlining writing errors the teacher can help beginning writers to recognize and learn from their mistakes.	SD 1	2	3	4	SA 5
10. Opportunities for the students to talk to each other as they write should be an integral part of the beginning writing process.	SD 1	2	3	4	SA 5
11. Beginning writers should be discouraged from using erasers as they write, as their errors are better corrected in the editing process.	SD 1	2	3	4	SA 5

12. The children's ability to copy words fairly accurately is one indicator of their development as writers.	SD 1	2	3	4	SA 5
13. In the initial stages of writing development the teacher or aide should act as a scribe for the writer until he or she learns to form letters and words correctly.	SD 1	2	3	4	SA 5
14. Children learn how to spell and punctuate by working with the teacher on editing their own writing.	SD 1	2	3	4	SA 5
15. Copying sentence patterns is one of the most effective ways to get beginning writers started on the writing process.	SD 1	2	3	4	SA 5
16. Students who enter grade one knowing how to print letters and spell words need as much help with their writing as do those who don't know how to print and spell.	SD 1	2	3	4	SA 5
17. In the beginning writing program worksheets can be used to develop and reinforce basic writing skills.	SD 1	2	3	4	SA 5
18. An important part of the beginning writing process is having the teacher ask questions of the student writers so that they can clarify their ideas.	SD 1	2	3	4	SA 5
19. An indication of how students are developing as writers can be gauged by looking at how neatly and accurately they complete their workbook activities.	SD 1	2	3	4	SA 5
20. Most authorized basal workbooks contain a reasonably logical sequence of developmental writing activities	SD 1	2	3	4	SA 5
21. Beginning writers should do their personal writing in groups as interaction is an essential part of the writing process.	SD 1	2	3	4	SA 5
22. Early emphasis on the mechanics of writing helps the beginning writer to establish a solid base for later writing development.	SD 1	2	3	4	SA 5
23. When they first start to write children should be encouraged to write scribble and picture stories as this is the first step in the beginning writing process.	SD 1	2	3	4	SA 5
24. Worksheet activities are important in that they provide that essential structure which grade ones need in order to develop as writers.	SD 1	2	3	4	SA 5

Selection of the Sample

Thirty-eight Grade One teachers in a mid-sized school system in Alberta were asked to be part of the study. The teachers were drawn from nineteen elementary schools which serve a variety of rural and urban populations. All of the teachers have at least a B. Ed. degree, five have two degrees and two have Master's degrees. The teachers have from four to seven years of university training (mean= 4.26 years), and an average of 11.5 years of teaching experience (range 1-29 years). Half of the group have been teaching for ten or more years, and the average length of service in their present school averages 5.2 years (range 1-25 years).

In recent years, this jurisidiction, like many school systems in Alberta, has been undergoing a gradual transformation from a reading "skills" based language arts curriculum to a more holistic, integrated approach, which stresses the development of both receptive and expressive language competencies. In part this has been the outcome of the thrust from the Alberta Department of Education, the development of new language arts materials which have been made available to teachers, and the omnipresent "whole language" theme which has pervaded teacher's conventions and inservices in recent years. A major component of this "whole language" thrust has been the high profile given to "writing," a much needed move according to Donald Graves (1984) to "Balance the Basics." There has been a growing awareness on the part of the teachers in this system of the need to present a balanced language arts curriculum; thus, in the recent past they have been exposed to a series of "whole language" inservices.

Professional data regarding teaching experience and education were obtained with permission from the system personnel department. Permission to conduct this research project was obtained from the Central Administration of the juridiction, and the teachers were encouraged by the Superintendent to take part in the project (Appendix D).

Collection and Analysis of the Data

Distribution Procedures

At the beginning of June,1986 a letter (Appendix E) and a class set of pictures were distributed to the teachers. The letter requested their assistance and detailed the procedures to be used in collecting the writing sample. Emphasis was placed on the fact that the students' first drafts were to be returned. As has been indicated, theoretically, teacher input into student writing varies considerably depending upon the teacher's orientation. By asking for first drafts, an attempt was made to control the amount of input that the teacher had, and thus ensure a reasonable degree of uniformity in the collection of the writing samples. In the letter the teachers were also informed that they would be receiving a "survey questionnaire" in the week following. The reason for the delay was to ensure that the writing sample was generated before the teachers received an indication of the concerns expressed in the survey. Finally, the teachers were requested to return the completed survey and the students' writing by June 10, a period of approximately 10 days. The conclusion of the request letter assured the teachers that the study was not intended as an evaluation of them or their students, stressing instead the research aspect of the project and assuring the teachers that their responses would be anonymous.

Return Rate and Data Compilation

Of the thirty-eight surveys which were distributed, twenty-nine responses were received. Of these twenty-nine, three returned only the survey, one returned a class set of writing and an incomplete survey, one returned a survey and only two writing samples, twenty-four returned a completed survey and a class set of writing. The twenty eight completed surveys formed the basis for the analysis of the effectiveness of the survey.

The teachers' responses to the survey, on the continuum from Strongly Disagree(1) to Strongly Agree (5), were assigned an alphabetic code and transferred to a computerized spread sheet (Table 2). The vertical axis on the spread sheet represents the teacher code (A-AD), and the horizontal axis represents the number of the statement in the survey. In order to facilitate the analysis procedures the teachers' responses were regrouped according to criteria established by the referent procedure detailed below.

Development of a Model "Process" Profile

As one of the concerns of the study was with the potential of the TOWP to differentiate between the two broadly classified orientations, it was necessary to establish a model profile which would serve as a reference. In order to establish this referent, a "process" model profile was developed by asking two graduate students in Language Arts, a school principal, a writing program coordinator, and a classroom teacher, all with acknowledged strong process orientations, to respond to the survey. The responses received from this group were regrouped according to the orientation which the statement reflected. In this manner, all of the first eleven statements represent the partial specifications of the process orientation and the final twelve representing a traditional skills orientation. Statement twenty-one was considered neither by this group. The responses from this group (Table 3) indicated that a model response set could be developed which reflected a strong process orientation. This model response set was derived by taking the consensus for each item from the respondents. Interrater reliablity based on the responses was 0.899. This model process response set was then converted to a profile (figure 1) which illustrated graphically a process orientation based on the specifications outlined in the TOWP.

Table 2

Teacher Responses to Survey (n=28)

	Statement #																							
	2	5	7	10	14	16	18	23	8	11	21	3	13	1	4	6	9	12	15	17	19	20	22	24
Model	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	3	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Teacher A	3	5	5	2	3	2	3	4	4	2	1	2	3	3	2	3	1	2	2	4	2	1	3	2
B	3	5	4	5	4	5	4	5	4	3	5	3	3	3	3	4	2	1	3	3	1	2	1	1
C	5	4	5	1	3	4	5	4	5	1	2	5	4	1	5	5	4	5	2	2	2	3	5	4
D	4	5	3	4	5	4	3	5	5	3	3	3	2	2	1	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	2
E	5	5	3	4	3	4	5	3	4	2	3	4	4	1	2	3	1	1	2	1	1	2	2	1
F	5	5	1	5	5	5	5	5	3	3	3	1	5	1	5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
G	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	1	5	2	1	4	1	1	1	3	2	2	1	1
H	4	4	4	4	1	3	4	4	4	2	2	4	3	3	4	5	4	3	3	3	2	2	5	3
I	5	5	4	3	2	3	3	2	5	4	2	3	3	3	3	4	3	3	3	4	4	4	3	4
J	5	5	5	3	3	2	5	5	5	3	3	1	2	4	3	3	1	3	4	3	1	1	3	3
K	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	4	2	5	2	3	1	1	2	2	4	1	4	2	3	3	4
L	5	5	5	5	4	4	5	5	4	1	3	2	4	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	1
N	4	3	4	3	4	4	4	3	3	2	2	3	3	3	4	5	2	2	2	3	1	3	1	2
O	5	5	5	4	4	3	5	4	3	3	5	2	4	1	3	3	1	1	3	1	1	1	3	2
P	5	5	5	4	2	4	2	2	4	3	4	4	2	3	4	4	1	3	2	3	4	2	2	3
Q	4	5	4	3	4	2	4	2	4	4	3	2	2	3	2	5	4	2	3	3	3	3	4	2
R	5	5	5	5	1	4	5	5	5	4	5	4	4	1	1	2	1	1	3	4	1	3	1	1
S	5	5	1	1	5	4	5	5	4	1	2	1	3	1	1	3	1	1	4	1	1	1	1	1
T	5	5	5	3	4	3	5	5	5	1	2	4	4	1	5	4	5	2	4	4	4	3	4	3
U	5	5	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	3	4	2	4	3	2	3	3	3	4	3	1	3	2	2
V	5	5	3	3	4	3	2	4	4	2	3	4	3	2	2	2	4	3	3	4	2	3	2	3
W	5	5	5	3	4	4	5	4	5	2	3	3	3	1	1	3	2	1	3	1	1	1	1	1
X	5	5	5	5	5	5	1	4	5	5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	1
Z	5	5	5	4	5	3	5	3	5	2	3	4	1	3	5	4	3	1	1	2	1	1	3	1
AA	5	5	5	4	4	4	5	5	5	4	4	3	4	2	3	3	2	3	3	2	2	3	3	3
AB	4	3	4	2	4	3	5	5	3	1	2	4	4	2	4	5	2	2	3	4	3	2	5	3
AC	5	5	1	5	4	4	5	1	5	3	4	5	4	2	4	4	5	2	3	3	2	2	5	2
AD	4	5	5	4	4	3	5	5	4	2	3	4	4	4	3	5	4	2	4	3	2	4	4	3

A - Z = Teachers who returned the TOWP and a set of children's writing (teacher M only returned 2 pieces of writing).

AA - AD = Teachers who returned only the TOWP.

Table 3

Interrater Profiles - Validation of the "Process" Profile

	Statement #																						
	2	5	7	10	14	16	18	23	8	11	21	3	13	1	4	6	9	12	15	17	19	20	22	24
Interrater																								
5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	3	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	4	3	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
3	5	5	5	5	4	4	5	4	4	4	3	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
2	5	5	5	5	2	5	5	5	5	4	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
1	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	4	5	4	2	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
Process Profile	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	3	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

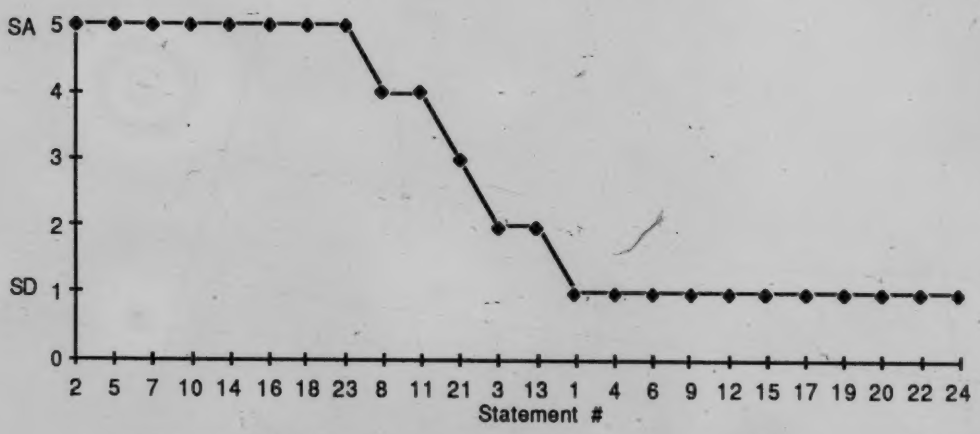


Figure 1. Model process profile developed from interrater responses.

Procedures Used to Analyze the Teachers' Responses

The first step in the analysis of the responses was to compare them to the model set which had been developed. This analysis was greatly facilitated by using a computer program which converted each teacher's response set into a profile. This profile was in turn superimposed on the "model" profile, and a comparative set of data were established for each teacher.

Generation of the Writing Sample

In order to address the research question pertaining to the effect of the teacher's theoretical orientation on the writing which is produced by Grade One students, it was necessary for a writing sample to be collected from the students. As this writing sample was to constitute a formal evaluation of the student's ability and some comparative data had to be generated, it was apparent that the method used to obtain the sample had to consistent throughout. A major difficulty in delineating a procedure to be used in the collection of the students' writing is that the two orientations utilize contrasting approaches to having students write. A professed aim of the "process" approach is to have the children write on topics of their own choice; whereas children in "traditional skills" classrooms have typically been given topics about which to write.

After discussions of this dilemma with a group of graduate students in language arts and the researcher's faculty advisor, an "open-ended" writing assignment using a picture was decided upon as the writing stimulus. This constituted a compromise as it was realized that "process" students may find the assignment overly confining, while the "traditional skills" students may find it overwhelming, particularly if they had not been exposed to the idea of writing without a carefully structured outline from the teacher.

The use of a picture stimulus to generate writing samples is a generally accepted procedure, both in writing research and in the assessment of children's writing abilities. Alberta Education used this procedure to gather grades three and six student writing samples in its language arts Provincial Achievement Tests in 1983 and 1985. The National Assessment of Educational Progress, Assessment of Writing (1969-70), a national survey of writing in the United States, used a picture stimulus which was accompanied by the following instructions:

> Look carefully at the picture and decide what is happening. You might want to think about what happened a few minutes ago as well as what will happen next.
> ... Use your imagination and write about this picture. Give your story a title. (Hailey, 1978, p.26)

Similar procedures are used by the authors of the Written Expression Test which uses a picture stimulus and attempts to "measure written expression objectively" (Johnson and Hubly, 1982, p.1). The instructions which are given to the students by the teacher state,

> Look at the picture. I would like you to use your imagination to think of a story about this picture. As you are thinking about your story, try to have a beginning, middle, and end. (Johnson and Hubly, 1982, p. 11)

The picture used in the present study showed a large dragon looking in the window of a house at a mother and a small boy. Attached to the dragon's neck is a rope, the other end of which is being held by the boy (Appendix E). The teachers participating in the study were asked to distribute a copy of the picture to each of their students together with the following directions:

Tell what happened after the boy brought the dragon home.

OR

Tell how the boy got to bring the dragon home.

OR

Write a story about what the picture makes you think of.

There were no admonitions given about the need for neatness or careful spelling, or how the writing should be structured. Teachers were simply asked to use the procedure which they usually followed when having their students write. In order to ensure that the writing context was similar for all of the children, teachers were requested to return only the first draft of the students' writing. Children were allowed to mark their writing "first draft" if they felt uncomfortable about submitting unedited work.

Procedures Used in the Analysis of the Writing Samples

As the basic premise of this study is that the partial specifications of a writing ideology will be reflected in the writing of the students, the children's writing was analyzed according to specifications for both orientations. The following dimensions were incorporated into the analysis of the children's writing:

1. Handwriting
2. Length
3. Correct Spelling
4. Holistic Impression
5. Use of Erasers
6. Writing Material

Approximately 480 pieces of writing comprised the complete writing sample. Assessment along the various dimensions was done only after the whole sample had been read by the researcher. This procedure established a total impression of writing and the range of writing which had been submitted.

Criteria for the assessment:

1. Handwriting

Handwriting was scored according to a five point scale:

5	few errors in letter formation, neat, top 10% of sample.
4	neat clear, can be read without trouble, above average
3	some errors in letter formation, can be read, good spacing
2	problems with letter formation, spacing, alignment, some distortions make reading difficult in places
1	many distortions, spacing problems, difficult to read most of the time

(Appendix F provides examples of the writing according to each category.)

The handwriting mark was based on general impression, an intensive letter by letter analysis was not conducted.

2. Length

All of the words in the story including the title and excluding "the end" were counted. Invented spellings which had the appearance of words, even if they could not be deciphered, were included in the overall count. Numbers and expressions such as "oooo..www" were not counted.

3. Correct Spelling

All the correct words in each piece of writing were counted. Apostrophe and capitalization errors were not considered as spelling errors. The correct spelling score is recorded as a percentage of the total number of words in the piece.

4. Holistic Impression

Holistic Impression was scored on a scale of one to seven and was based on the overall impression which the researcher gained from reading the piece through. It is based on the reader's response to the entire piece rather than to separate aspects such as mechanics, vocabulary or neatness (Edwards, 1985; Hailey, 1978). In this study the total impression was derived from a number of considerations including, the relationship of the story to the picture, the relative sophistication of the story in terms of the conception of time, and whether or not the story contained a moral or theme besides "they all lived happily ever after."

5. Use of Erasers

Whether or not the students erased in their writing was noted.

6. Writing Material

The type of paper on which the children's writing was done was noted.

Statistical Analysis and Scoring Reliability

A t-test analysis comparing scores on the first four dimensions used to analyze writing samples two groups was conducted. The confidence level was set at .05.

In order to ensure scoring reliablity for the handwriting and holistic impression dimensions, a random sample of 25 protocols was drawn from the submissions. A teacher, considered to be a specialist in the writing area, and the researcher independently scored them according to the criteria established for each dimension. Interrater reliablities for handwriting (.909) and Holistic Impression (.933) were recorded.

Summary

This chapter has described the design of the study. The major components of the design are the development of the survey instrument, the procedure used to establish a referent model profile, and the assessment procedures used in the analysis of the students' writing. A description of the teacher sample and the procedures used to collect the student writing sample were also outlined.

Chapter 4 reports the findings of the study and discusses them in relation to the four research questions asked in this study. In the conclusion of the chapter, the findings of this research are compared to the results obtained in related research.

Chapter 4

THE FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

This chapter reports the findings of the study. It presents the results of the analysis of the teachers' responses to the survey instrument (TOWP), and the results of the teacher profile - process model profile comparisons. The analysis of the children's writing is discussed in terms of the six assessment dimensions. The findings resulting from these analyses are then related to the research questions.

The first section examines the findings in terms of the instrument's potential to indicate the teachers' theoretical orientation. The second is given to the relationship of the findings to the question of the effect of the teachers' orientation on the students' writing. Finally, the findings related to the differences in the writing produced by the two groups of children, together with the influence of the teachers' theoretical orientation are presented. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the findings of this study as they relate to other research and a summary of the findings of the study.

Results

Item Analysis of the Survey Instrument

An item analysis was done on the responses from the 28 teachers who completed the survey. The results of this analysis are detailed in Table 4. Based on this analysis, three items which did not generate any disagreement were assumed to be poor discriminators. It was concluded that these statements appeared to be acceptable, if not in practice, at least in theory, to the majority of the teachers who responded. For each of these items, there was a minority of teachers who did indicate that they were undecided about the ideas contained in the statement.

Table 4

Distribution of Teacher Responses to TOWP (n=29)

	SD				SA
	1	2	3	4	5
Item# 1	11	8	8	2	0
2	0	0	1	6	22
3	5	6	7	9	2
4	9	7	6	4	3
5	0	0	2	3	24
6	3	3	10	7	6
7	3	0	3	8	15
8	0	0	3	11	15
9	12	6	2	5	2
10	3	2	7	9	9
11	6	8	7	5	3
12	11	8	8	1	1
13	2	5	9	11	1
14	2	2	4	14	7
15	3	6	14	5	1
16	1	4	8	9	7
17	8	4	11	5	1
18	1	3	3	4	18
19	14	10	2	3	0
20	9	7	9	3	0
21	2	7	9	5	5
22	10	4	7	3	4
23	1	3	3	6	15
24	10	7	8	4	0

The following three items were considered to have failed to discriminate. Item 2, "Orally sharing what they have written with other children helps beginning writers develop a sense of audience," was a concept that was supported by all of the teachers except one. Similarly, statement 5, which deliberately maintained that the "most important" aspect of the Grade One program should be free expression of the students' ideas, was accepted by all of the teachers except one. Statement 8 regarding the positive effect of creative drama and role playing on children's writing development elicited a similar strong agreement from the majority of the teachers. Three teachers indicated that they were undecided on this item.

With the exception of these three items the statements in the survey elicited a range of responses . Responses to seventeen of the items ranged fom one to five (SD - SA); while responses to the remaining four had a range of three on the continuum.

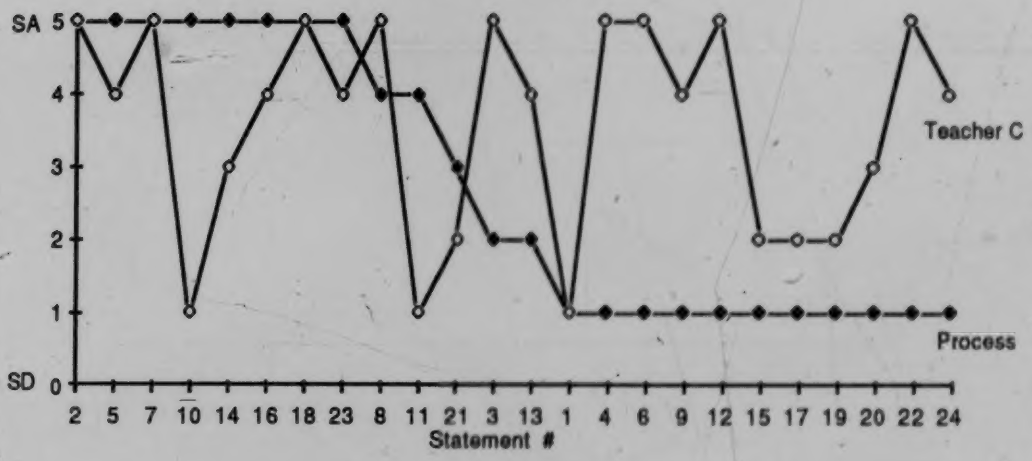
Development of Teacher Profiles

In order to establish the teachers' theoretical orientation the data generated by the survey instrument was analyzed along the three dimensions outlined in the design of the study. The teachers' responses were converted to a profile and this profile was superimposed on the model profile. Figure 2 shows the profiles of the two teachers who were at the polar positions on the survey. These comparative profiles formed the basis for the examination of the teachers' responses along three dimensions:

A - the range of deviation from the model,
B - the disagreement rate,
C - the undecided rate.

By analyzing these three dimensions, a tentative conclusion was reached as to the theoretical orientation to writing of each of the teachers. The first dimension (A) examined the extent to which the teacher' responses varied from the profile established by the model. These differences were recorded as a composite total. The second analysis, Dimension B, looked at the "disagreement rate" which was the number of total disagreements (i.e. those items for which the teacher indicated an opposite belief) which the teacher had with the model. In the analysis of dimensions B and C only the teacher's agreement or disagreement was taken into account, the relative strength of the agreement was not considered. A third dimension (C) analyzed was the number of undecided options chosen by the teacher (i.e the number of 3's indicated on the disagreement-agreement continuum). The analysis was done for only those teachers whose TORP responses were accompanied by writing samples from the students (n=24). Table 5 indicates the results of the analysis for each of the teachers along the three dimensions. The findings are reported according to each dimension.

Traditional Skills



Process

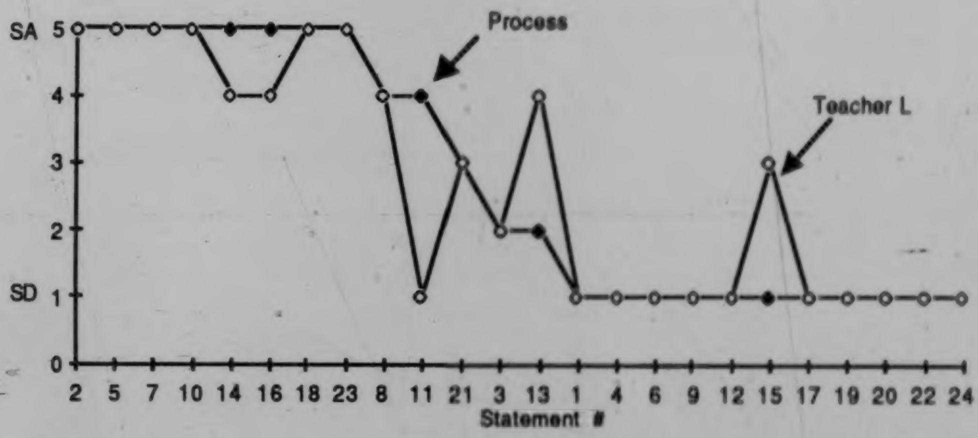


Figure 2. Comparative profiles illustrating two contrasting orientations to writing.

1. Dimension A - The Range of Variation. A maximum variation score would be 90 and would indicate complete disagreement with the position set out by the model profile. The scores obtained from this sample had a range of 37, with the closest score being 9 and the most discrepant being 46 (mean=27).

2. Dimension B - The Disagreement Rate. On this dimension the greatest number of disagreements was 10 (Teacher T) and the least 0 (Teacher D) (mean = 3.74).

3. Dimension C -The Undecided Rate. In the study the greatest number of undecided responses was 10 and the least was 1 (mean = 5.54).

Table 5

Teacher Profile - Model Process Profile Comparison Data

	Teacher																							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Z
Variation	33	23	46	24	20	14	15	44	43	28	22	9	34	20	35	35	20	20	42	27	35	15	13	25
Disagreement	4	1	9	0	2	3	2	7	7	3	4	2	3	1	7	5	3	4	10	2	5	1	1	4
Undecided	6	8	2	7	5	3	1	7	10	10	3	2	9	7	5	7	2	2	4	7	9	6	1	6

Discussion of Findings Related to Question 1

The first question posed in this study concerned the potential of a survey instrument to identify the theoretical orientations which Grade One teachers bring to beginning writing and writing instruction. In reviewing the data generated by the survey some tentative conclusions can be reached. They are tentative because the potential of this instrument to discriminate is based on several assumptions. In the first place it assumes that a "strong" process orientation was established by the five "process" reviewers. It is obvious that the responses supplied by this committee were based on a reasonably sound knowledge, developed through research and practice, of both orientations. It is also assumed that the average teacher in the study (mean experience =11.5 years) would not have the knowledge base of the committee, nor would they have been exposed to many of the recent discussions about writing development appearing in current research literature, as their pre-service training will have pre-dated the advent of the process writing movement.

Support for this latter contention becomes more apparent when the data which detail the undecided responses of the teachers is examined (Table 5). Of the possible 672 response options (28 teachers x 24 statements), 156 indicated neither agreement or disagreement (23.2 percent of the responses were 3's). This was taken to indicate that the teachers either had no firm belief about that statement, or that perhaps the teachers were unaware that the practice detailed in the statement affected or was related to the children's writing. This was particularly true of the statements which reflected the process orientation.

If these assumptions are accepted, then it can be concluded that most of the teachers did respond according to what they believed, rather than what they thought they ought to believe. When this is coupled with the fact that some of the profiles generated were remarkably close to matching the model, while others were quite distanced, the conclusion can be drawn that the TOWP did indeed reflect a range of beliefs.

Another assumption made by a survey instrument such as the TOWP, which calls for a forced response, is that all of the respondents can distinguish between "agree" and "strongly agree" and the reciprocal. If only the deviation from the model is scored, this factor is not taken into account. However, when the rate of disagreement is taken into account, a stronger indication of the teacher's beliefs is obtained. By looking at the rate of agreement without regard for the relative strength of this agreement, it is possible to extract the teacher's general tendency toward either of the orientations. Based on the analysis of this general tendency, it is apparent that there were teachers who held strong positions on either end of the continuum (range 0-10). A general conclusion can be reached that the instrument did indicate some reasonably strong beliefs, and furthermore, that there were distinct patterns of beliefs displayed in the teachers' responses.

Discussion of the Findings Related to Question 2

The second question posed in the study related to the ability of the survey instrument to create a profile which was consistent with either a process or traditional skills ideological perspective. The question is answered in the affirmative by referring to the development of the "model" process profile. The consensus obtained by having five confirmed process proponents respond to the TOWP illustrated that the instrument did indeed develop a distinctive process profile. Confirmation of a distinctive traditional-skills profile is a somewhat more difficult undertaking. The procedures used to develop the process profile are difficult to replicate because of the problems inherent in identifying a group of teachers who, by their own admission, are traditional-skills proponents. Thus, for the purposes of the study, those teachers whose responses to the survey most closely matched those beliefs usually associated with the traditional skills approach were considered to comprise this group. In arriving at this conclusion the following reasoning was followed.

When the responses of the teachers were superimposed on the model process profile, it was apparent that the survey did not differentiate the teachers into two distinct groups. In most cases the teachers' responses ranged along a continuum. Thus, there was no one teacher who was wholly process or one who was wholly traditional skills. However, although the teachers' responses did not entirely match the model profile, (the mean of the deviation from the process model was 27), there were indications that some of the teachers did agree almost entirely with the statements supporting process practice while disagreeing with those associated with traditional practices. Dimension B (Table 3) details the extent of agreement that the teachers had with the process model profile. Unlike Dimension A, where the the teacher's variation from the model includes the differences in whether the teacher simply "agrees" or "strongly agrees", the relative strength of the agreement is not taken into account in Dimension B. The analysis along Dimension B indicates that one teacher (D) was totally in agreement with the model position, four others (B, O, W, and X) disagreed on only one point, while four (E, G, L, and U) disagreed on only two. In contrast, one teacher (T) disagreed on ten of the statements compared to the model, teacher C on nine, and teachers H, I, and P on seven.

Although three of the items, which theoretically should have been indicators of the teacher's theoretical orientation, did not live up to this potential, others provided strong indications of teacher's beliefs. In the survey, ten of the items made up the partial specifications of the process orientation while thirteen made up those of the traditional skills. Based on the validation procdures used in the development of the instrument and the fact that nine of the teachers indicated agreement with the specifications of the process orientation, it can be concluded that the TOWP has the potential to indicate the Grade One teacher's theoretical orientation to writing and writing instruction .

Relationship of Theoretical Orientation to Children's Writing

The second component of this research related to the manner in which the teacher's theoretical orientation would be reflected in the writing produced by the children. In order to investigate this question, the five teachers, D, O,W,X, and B who the TOWP had indicated were almost entirely in agreement with the process orientation, were chosen as the representative sample of the "process orientation." Teachers T,C,H,I, and P were chosen as representative of the "traditional skills" position as they had indicated the strongest agreement with that orientation. The children's writing from these groups was analyzed to examine how it reflected the theoretical orientation of the teacher.

The children's writing samples were analyzed according to the six dimensions listed and the results are presented in summary form in Table 6. In addition to this, those items from the TOWP which related to the partial specifications for the traditional skills orientation were examined in relation to the responses provided by the teachers. Table 7 details these responses for each group. The result of this analysis is discussed in terms of each of the orientations.

Discussion of Findings Related to Question 3

The Traditional Skills Orientation. In general the teachers in this orientation tended to agree with those statements on the TOWP which related to the development of specific writing skills. Statement 3, which refers to the practice of giving children the spelling of words as they write, carries with it the underlying assumption of student dependency and the inability of children to write unless they are given the correct words, was agreed to by four of the five teachers. Similarly, a concern for the traditional writing skills, printing and legibility, was echoed in their responses. All of the teachers agreed that consistent letter formation is an "important part of the writing process" (statement 4), and also that legible printing is an essential component of the beginning writing program (statement 6). Three of the teachers felt that children should erase errors rather than correct them in the editing process, while three felt that the accuracy and neatness of children's workbooks did give an indication of the students' writing development. Two teachers did disagree on this point. Statement 22, which claimed that "early emphasis on the mechanics of writing establishes a solid base for later writing development," was agreed to by three of the teachers, with one disagreeing. In most of the cases where the teacher did not agree to the ideas contained in the statement, the undecided response was chosen.

Overall the five teachers agreed 65 percent of the time with the statements supporting traditional practice, while disagreeing with them only 12.5 percent of the time. Thus, in general, there was an indication that this group of teachers did support the ideas which make up the partial specifications of the traditional-skills orientation.

The writing produced by the children in these "traditional -skills" classrooms exhibited a wide range of individual writing competencies, both in form and in content. When this was coupled with a number of inter-teacher differences, it was difficult to identify writing which could be categorized as "traditional-skills." However, there were some salient features that appeared consistently in the children's writing in this group.

Table 6

Comparison of Student Achievement Along Six Dimensions by Teacher and Group

	Dimension					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Teacher C	3.23	56.1	81.1%	76%	3.19	Interlined
Teacher H	3.04	74.5	89.7%	100%	1.76	Foolscap
Teacher I	3.38	64.8	75.2%	100%	2.57	Interlined
Teacher T	3.19	74.8	76.1%	86%	2.38	Interlined
Teacher P	1.78	30.3	79.5%	100%	2.6	Interlined
Trad - skills Mean	2.91	61.1	79.9%	92%	2.51	
Teacher D	3.72	90.7	77.5%	100%	4.7	Unlined
Teacher O	3.28	42.9	90.5%	100%	2.6	Interlined
Teacher W	3.85	87	79.8%	100%	5.6	Interlined
Teacher X	2.64	92	94.7%	86%	4.2	Interlined
Teacher B	3.05	34.9	90.6%	89%	3.8	Interlined
Process Mean	3.35	68.7	87.1%	95%	4.16	

KEY

Dimension 1. Handwriting

Dimension 2. Length

Dimension 3. Percentage Correct Spelling

Dimension 4. Use of Erasers

Dimension 5. Holistic Impression

Dimension 6. Writing Paper

Table 7

Teacher Responses to Key Specifications of Traditional Skills Orientation

	Statement #							
	1	3	4	6	11	12	19	22
Teacher C	SD	SA	SA	A	SD	SA	D	SA
H	N	A	A	SA	D	N	D	A
I	N	N	A	A	A	N	A	N
T	D	A	SA	A	SD	D	A	A
P	N	A	A	A	N	N	A	D
Trad-skills								
Teacher D	D	N	SD	N	N	D	D	N
O	SD	D	N	N	N	SD	SD	N
W	SD	N	SD	D	A	SD	SD	SD
X	SD	SD	SD	SD	SA	SD	SD	SD
B	N	N	N	A	N	SD	SD	~~SD~~
Process								

Statement Key

Statement 1.	A major problem that many beginning writers have is with letter reversals.
Statement 3.	The teacher can help Grade Ones develop as writers by helping them with the spelling of words as they are writing.
Statement 4.	The use of inter-lined paper is necessary because it helps beginning writers to understand that consistent letter size is an important part of the writing process.
Statement 6.	Developing the students' ability to print legibly should be an essential component of the beginning writing program.
Statement 11.	Beginning writers should be discouraged from using erasers as they write as their errors are better corrected in the editing process.
Statement 12.	The children's ability to copy words fairly accurately is one indicator of their development as writers.
Statement 19.	An indication of how students are developing as writers can be gauged by looking at how neatly and accurately they complete their workbook activities.
Statement 22.	Early emphasis on the mechanics of writing helps the beginning writer to establish a solid base for later writing development.

Of the five teachers who indicated a strong traditional skills orientation, Teacher P is something of an anomaly. Even though this teacher indicated a reasonably strong agreement with the traditional skills orientation, the writing submitted by this teacher did not match, in appearance or in content, the samples submitted by the other teachers in this group. For example, although this teacher agreed that interlined paper was important, the writing was done by the children on unlined paper, which caused them numerous obvious composition and alignment problems. Few of the children displayed any control of handwriting conventions (mean handwriting assessment=1.78), and the writing was short in length and poorly structured. Although it is difficult to visualize the contexts in which these children wrote, it could be assumed that these children either were not used to writing on this type of paper or that they had not written at all during the school year. Thus, the discussion which follows is tempered somewhat by the knowledge that the writing produced by this teacher's children did differ greatly from the norm, and that in every instance this exceptionality must be taken into account. The following discussion is based on the writing produced by the children in the classes of teachers C, H, I, and T.

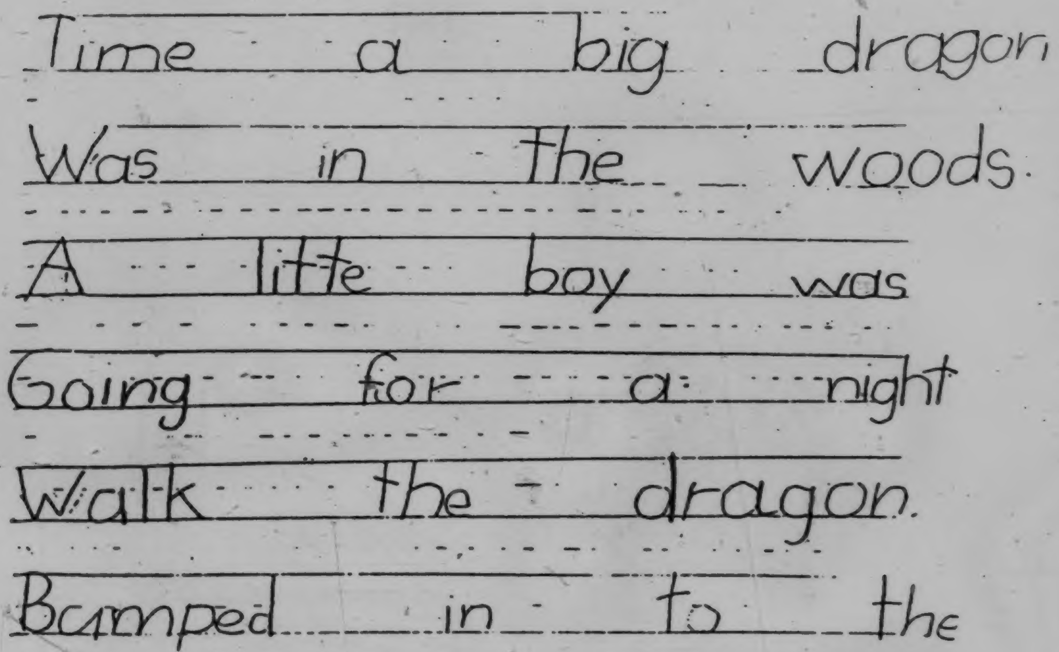
The teachers' expressed concern for neatness and legibility was apparent in the children's writing. The majority of the printing was characterized by well-formed letters, and on a scale of 1-5 the mean for each group ranged from 3.04 to 3.38 (Teacher P =1.78). There was also an obvious concern on the part of the students for correct word spacing. In one set (Teacher C) the children's writing contained excessive over spacing, and often a 4-5 cm space was left between words. Figure 3 is provided as illustration. In most of the others, careful spacing was apparent throughout, but not to this extent. All of these teachers indicated agreement with the idea that interlined paper is a valuable writing aid for children, and three of the four did submit the writing samples on this paper. Two teachers (C and T) used a teacher-made variety, while the third used interlined foolscap. In general the children did adhere to the requirement that the height of the lower case letters should not exceed the dotted centre line. In this group all of the children double-spaced their writing. Once again, Teacher P was the exception. The writing from the children in this class showed a concern for spacing, but not to the extent shown by the other children in this group. The teachers' beliefs about the use of erasers was not reflected in the children's writing. Whether the teacher believed it or not, all of the children used erasers. In fact, the children of Teacher C used erasers the least of any of the groups (skills or process) even though she strongly disagreed that their use should be discouraged when the children write their first drafts. All of the teachers in this group agreed that children should be allowed to experiment with word spellings in their writing, and approximately 16 percent of the words used by the children in this group fell into the invented spelling category. This contrasts somewhat with the idea that children should be given help with their spelling as they are writing, which was agreed to by three of the four teachers. Although, it must be noted that all of these teachers agreed that invented spelling was a part of Grade One writing development. Thus, the demands of the first draft presentation may have prompted these teachers to let their students simply write for this occasion without having to have words spelled for them.

Although there were some pieces of writing in this group which were rated high on the holistic impression scale, not one of the pieces rated at the top of the scale (7). On the Holistic Impression scale of 1-7, the mean for the four sets was 2.48. The primary reason for this relatively low score was that the writing typically did not show a high degree of abstraction or complexity of thought. Generally the writing was disjointed and did not impart the sense of a complete story structure. The majority of the children's writing in this group simply described the objects or the events in the picture without much elaboration. Two examples taken from different teachers illustrate this point.

Example A
Mommy is surprise.
Mommy is mad.
The dragon is scared.
The dragon is green (Teacher H student).

Example B

One day there was a Boy
He went to the woods
He fownd a dragon and
took it home the mom
Was scerd and the dragon
Was frendle and live
happily evur After   (Teacher I student)



Time a big dragon
Was in the woods.
A litte boy was
Going for a night
Walk the dragon.
Bamped in to the

Figure 3. Grade One writing illustrating over-emphasis on spacing.

Keeping in mind that the writing was produced by beginning writers, most of the stories written by the children in the group were told directly and relatively simply without embellishments such as description of setting and character, or development of side plots. An example from Teacher C illustrates this type of story (the spacing attempts to capture the presentation format used by this student):

Example C

Timmy and the dragon
Once upno a time
There was a
boy name Timmy
he Said "I want
to cep a dragon"
and She Said "No"
and Tim want
to go to
his room and cry

Although the range of writing produced by this group of children made it difficult to establish a single set of characteristics which could be said to typify a "traditional skills" piece of writing, when the writing was examined according to the individual teacher sets, certain specific characteristics could be identified. Most obvious was Teacher C's stress on spacing which was carried to the extreme by the children. Similarly stylistic preferences were evident. For example, in Teacher I's class 18 of the 21 stories started with "One day" or "Once upon a time;" whereas only five of the 21 children in Teacher T's class used that lead. In Teacher H's class, the majority of the students used a "one sentence per line" format. The sentences were usually short and simply made statements about the picture (as shown in example A above). In contrast, all of the children in Teacher I's class wrote a story of some kind, and at least half of the stories contained the basic story elements, a setting, beginning, a goal set by the main character, an attempt or series of attempts, and an ending or outcome.

Thus, the writing produced by the children in the traditional skills group did reflect in a general sense some of the concerns typically associated with this orientation. The teachers' beliefs about the need for correct form were reflected in the children's writing. However, the inter-teacher differences more readily exemplified how the individual teacher's beliefs and preferences are translated into actual practice. Overall, there were few pieces which demonstrated that the children were aware of the reader. The distinguishing feature of the writing in this group was that most of the pieces lacked a sense of audience, which means simply that most of the writing appeared to be be written simply as an exercise rather than as an opportunity to share ideas with a responsive reader.

The Process Orientation. In general the responses of the teachers in this group to those statements on the TOWP which related specifically to the development of children's writing "skills" tended to contrast sharply with those of the traditional skills group (Table 8). The process teachers disagreed with the statements which supported traditional practices 65 percent of the time, while agreeing only 2.5 percent of the time. It is important to note, however, that the teachers did not indicate any belief or were undecided 32.5 percent of the time. Teachers B, D, and O were undecided on four of the eight items, and Teacher X was the only one to take a strong position on all of the items.

The teachers were almost unanimous in their strong disagreement with the statements which referred to the value of copying words accurately, the indication of progress gained from neat and accurate completion of workbook activities, and the need for early emphasis on writing mechanics. Three of them strongly disagreed that interlined paper was necessary to the development of consistent letter size, and the group held different positions on the value of helping children to spell as they write and the role that legible printing plays in the development of children's writing abilities.

Overall the teachers who were identified as having a process orientation by the TOWP generally either rejected or were undecided on most of the statements which constituted the partial specifications of the traditional skills orientation.

In comparing their responses to the TOWP with the children's writing, some interesting observations can be made. Two of the teachers who disagreed that interlined paper was important and two who were undecided submitted the children's writing on interlined paper. Only Teacher D, who disagreed on the value of interlined paper, submitted the children's writing on unlined paper. However, unlike the writing from Teacher P, the handwriting and format demonstrated in the writing of Teacher D's children were consistently neat and legible. As was the case with the traditional skills group, all of the children in this group erased no matter what the teacher's expressed beliefs were. In four of the five sets of writing the children double spaced, and in their handwriting made an effort to conform to the reqiuirement that lower case letters stay below the dotted line. Where the children wrote on unlined paper (Teacher D), the children simply wrote one line under the other in a more conventional format.

Although the teachers disagreed with the idea that mechanics, neatness and legibility should be the focal point of beginning writing instruction, the children's presentation of their writing was usually of more than adequate quality. The mean handwriting score for the group was 3.31 with a range of 2.64-3.85. Some of the children in the sample did use emphatic letter spacing, but they were the exception rather than the rule. Generally, the children in the four groups who wrote on interlined paper did demonstrate a concern for precise word spacing. In contrast, the children who wrote on the unlined paper demonstrated a more adult-like word spacing schema.

The inter-teacher differences were not as pronounced as those of the traditional skills group, there were, however, some differences of note. In the writing done by the students of Teachers W and D there was a reasonably high degree of uniformity in the quality of the work, both form and content, produced by the students. Without any indication of the classroom contexts in which the writing is produced, it is difficult to explain the consistently high performance of the majority of the students in the classes of Teacher W and D. One might assume that these children had been exposed to a language arts program which had emphasized a great deal of writing, as it was obvious that these students had control of all aspects of the writing process. In contrast a wide range of variation was shown in the writing produced by the students of the other three teachers, from almost non-writing to complex stories.

In all of the class sets there was an overwhelming preference on the part of the children for starting the writing with "One day" or "Once upon a time." This usually indicated that some form of narrative was to follow. All of the children in the process group incorporated invented spelling freely into their writing; however, there was a considerable range in the mean percentages for each class. Approximately 5 percent of the words used by the children in Teacher D's class were classed as invented, while 22 percent of the words in Teacher B's class were classed this way. As with the traditional skills group all of these teachers indicated that invented spelling was a part of the beginning writing process; however none of them agreed that children should be given the spelling of words as they are writing. There was also a wide variation in the number of words which the children actually wrote. The mean number of words written was 69.3, ranging from the low of 34.9 produced by Teacher B's children to the high of 92 produced by the students of Teacher W. Similarly, a wide range of difference in the scores for each teacher on holistic impression was noted; however, the students in this group as a whole produced writing which contained ideas which were well developed and uniquely expressed. Most of the stories written by these children contained a sense of story and many illustrated a high level of abstraction. Two examples of such stories support this contention:

Example D

The Boy and The dragon

> Once upon a time ther was a boy that sed to his mother Can I go to the prack yes ses his mother and so he did. on the wae he met a dragon. the boy sed to the dragon Im going to the parck wood you like to come with me o k that wood be nice and thae did The boy went on a slid and then it was the dragons turn but he dit fit so tha went home And wenn tha got home the dragon was to big to go in the house. So he just had to go and sho his mom but his mom was so scared she runed out of the house and scremed help

She scareamed and did it a gen and then She setld down and screamed get that thing out of hier no mom Im going to ceap him oh no you can't winot because it blose fire mi dragon will never do that oh yes he will oh no he wot tomoro you can go up to the mowtims with wor dragon thats were he blelos and that's the end of The Story . (Teacher W student)

Example E

Mike saves his dragon

Once upon a time a boy named Mike brought a dragon home. I better not let Mom or Dad see it. So he took the dragon downstairs so Mom or Dad wont see. At bed time everyone went to bed. Oh Oh he's comeing upstairs. Then Mom went downstairs. Mom got knoked down. The dragon went right upstairs and kocked evryone out of bed. Dad said that dragon has to go. But dad he neds love. We can find him his home ocay Dad tomrow we'll go. Mom got up and went to bed.
The next day thay went to find a home for the dragon.
A biger dragon was puffing smoke at us. I think this is the mother the dragon went out of the car and ran to his mother. (Teacher D student)

There were many such stories which illustrated the ability of the student to go beyond the picture in order to hypothesize how the dragon came to be with the boy in first place, to predict some of the problems inherent in having a dragon for a pet, to visualize the mother's reaction, and finally to project a solution to the problem which would be acceptable to all of the participants, including the dragon.

In addition to the story sense contained in many of the stories produced by the children in the process group, there was also a strong writer's voice evident (Graves, 1983; Murray, 1984). Generally the writers in this group appeared to be aware of their audience and their obligation to the reader. In places they spoke directly to the reader, providing incidental information which the reader might require. For example, in a story written in the third person by a student in Teacher X's class, a family becomes sick because of the dragon's presence. In the conclusion of the story they get used to the dragon. The author's concluding statement to the reader is "well I geuss they whrt sick aftrall" (Well, I guess they weren't sick after all). Another writer informs the reader in the course of his story, "you might want to know that the dragon was huge" (Teacher X). Other writers took similar opportunities to share information with their audience, to ask questions of the reader, and to generally inform the reader that they had information which might help in the comprehension of the story.

Writers in this group experimented freely with vocabulary and sentence structure. In one story the writer hypothesized that "I thingck it wus a dinosaur and a cavman tringckilisdit" (tranquilized it) (Teacher B). In another the mother was "hipedatised" (hypnotized) (Teacher X), and in another, the writer was upset because when she took her dragon for a walk all of the adults had a "searenprobleim" (staring problem) (Teacher D). Complex sentence structures were used by several of the writers in this group, an example from Teacher W's class illustrates, " just then Jimmy's dad came storming in to the house growling wheres my food but The dragon aet all the food so he went back to work."

2

As with the writing produced by the children in the traditional-skills setting there was difficulty in establishing a clearly identifiable process writing "type ." In terms of the conventional aspects of the writing the children in this group produced clearly acceptable work. Although the teachers in this group indicated that they were not overly concerned with the surface features of the children's writing, it was obvious that the children had learned them very well during some stage of their writing development. The single feature which characterized the writing produced by these students was their finely tuned story sense. When this is coupled with the general sense of audience which these writers displayed, the conclusion must be reached that the content and style of the writing are the most discriminating aspects of the process writing group.

Discussion of Findings Related to Question 4

The final question posed in this study related to whether or not there were differences in the writing which is produced by children who are given instruction according to contrasting theoretical orientations. All of the research evidence gathered in this study, both statistical and descriptive, indicates support for the contention that there are significant differences in the writing produced by the two groups.

The data which were compiled according to the writing assessment criteria set out in the research design reveal that all of the dimensions did discriminate between the two groups. Table 8 indicates that there were significant differences in favor of the process group. Figure 4 presents the distribution profiles for each of the groups along the four dimensions, handwriting, percentage of words correct, length, and holistic impression.

Handwriting. Although the handwriting was judged on a first draft basis, it must be assumed that the basic condition was the same for all of the children. Where there may have been time or teacher input considerations, the overall size of the sample (n=210) perhaps overcomes these factors. The results of the analysis given in Table 8 indicate a difference in the level of handwriting competence, with the process group being significantly better handwriting quality.

Length. The length of the writing was calculated and included as a criterion, as productivity can be considered a rough indicator of the writer's emerging ability, particularly in Grade One. The score for each teacher represents the average number of words written by the children in the class. Once again, the amount of time that the teachers gave to the writing may have affected the number of words which the children produced. Also, for some of the children, it was apparent that the bottom of the page usually signalled the need to cease writing. However, it is assumed that the sample size serves somewhat to equalize this condition. From the data analysis it can be concluded that the children in the process group did produce significantly longer pieces of writing. However, there were considerable differences within the groups and within the classes themselves. Thus, the data compiled here has more pertinent application to an analysis of the percentage of correct words which the children wrote.

Percentage of Words Correct. Both groups of teachers supported the idea that invented spelling is part of the developmental pattern of beginning writers; however, the traditional group generally agreed that children should be given the spelling of words as they are writing. The process teachers generally disagreed with this position. As correct spelling of words is traditionally considered to be one of the pre-requisite writing skills, this concern should be reflected in the writing of the children in the traditional skills group. In this study this did not appear to be the case. Taken as a whole, children in the process group correctly spelled words significantly more often than those in the traditional group.

Holistic Impression. The holistic impression was based on the overall impact which the writing made on the researcher. It is perhaps the dimension upon which teacher input or time spent would have the least effect. Where there could have been help given to the children to correct handwriting or spelling errors, or even encouragement given to increase the number of words written, it is obvious that teachers cannot make children develop, organize and express their ideas in a relatively short writing time such as they were given in this study.

On this dimension the children in the process group displayed a greater comprehension of how stories are structured, a deeper level of abstraction, and a greater facility with written language structures. As a result, the mean for the process group was 4.16, while the mean for the traditional skills group was 2.51. Thus there was a significant difference between the groups in favor of the process group.

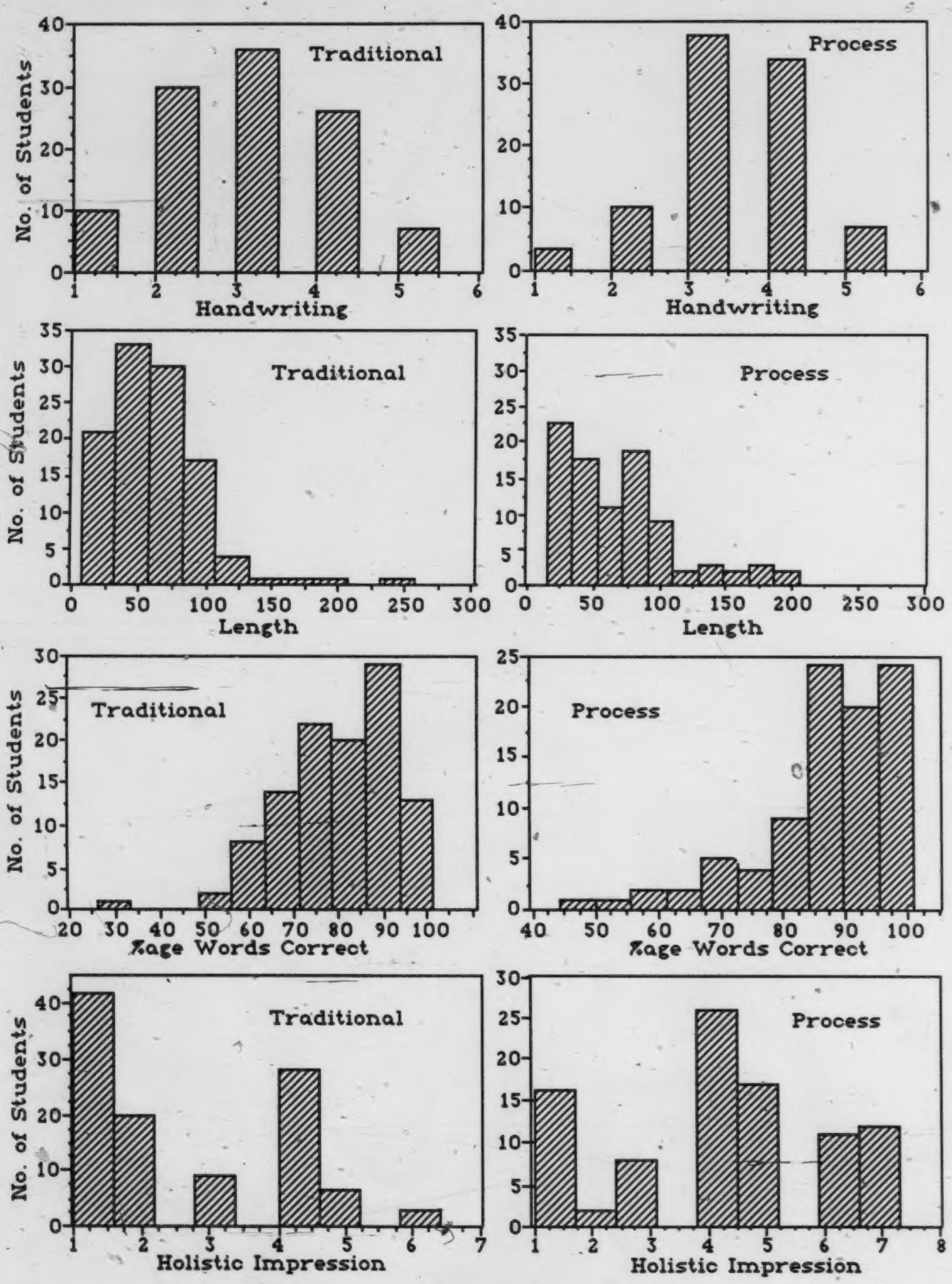


Figure 4. Frequency distribution graphs for study parameters.

Table 8

t-Test Results for Process Group vs. Traditional Group

	Process Mean	Traditional Mean	t Value	Probability
Handwriting	3.348	2.908	4.714	0.0001
Length	68.730	61.092	1.683	0.0480
%age Words Correct	87.056	79.979	6.098	0.0001
Holistic Impression	4.163	2.514	8.350	0.0001

91 Degrees of Freedom For All Criteria.

Informal Indicators of Differences. There were other informal indicators of differences which were based on the total impression gained from reading the writing of the two groups. Children in the process group provided titles for their stories 75 percent of the time, while only 39 percent of the traditional skills children did. In addition to a difference in number of titles, there were also differences in the purpose which the titles served. Titles used by the process group tended to summarize or indicate the major idea in the story, for example, "A Dragon is Found," "Mike saves the Dragon," and "Lost! A Dragon." Titles used by the traditional skills children tended not to contain verbs, usually indicating simply the characters who were in their stories, for example, "The Boy and the Dragon" or "The Boy and the Mom."

On all of the dimensions investigated there were differences between the two groups. From an analysis of the data compiled from the TOWP and assessment of the children's writing, the assumption is made that the reasons for these differences must be attributed, in some way, to the belief system which underlies the teacher's beliefs about writing and writing instruction in Grade One classrooms.

Discussion in Relation to Other Research

Survey Instrument Development Procedures

One of the conclusions reached in the present study is that the survey instrument which was developed has the potential to indicate a range of teacher beliefs about writing and writing instruction. These findings are supported by those of Barr and Duffy (1978), Gere et al. (1981), and DeFord (1979, 1985). All of these researchers found that an instrument which incorporated the same basic design elements as the TOWP did indeed differentiate teachers' belief systems.

Barr and Duffy (1978), the authors of this Propositional Inventory, concluded that their final draft reflected not only "the theoretical conceptions gleaned from the literature, but also the more practical concerns gleaned from observational data" (Barr & Duffy, 1978, p.7). Ultimately they concluded that "The Propositional Inventory provides an efficient and reliable means for assessing teachers' generalized beliefs about reading" (1978, p.8). Unlike the Barr and Duffy research, the present study did not use observational data, but found that teachers' beliefs were reflected in student outcomes.

The procedures used in the development of the TOWP reflect the design employed by Barr and Duffy in the development of the Propositional Inventory. A step which was not taken by Barr and Duffy was to create an initial pilot using teachers in the field. This was done in the present study, and the responses which were generated through this procedure allowed for considerable refinement of the instrument.

DeFord's purpose in creating the TORP was to develop an instrument which would indicated a teacher's beliefs about reading. The refinement and validation procedures used by DeFord indicate the future direction that can be taken if the TWOP is to be fully validated. However, the analysis procedures set out by DeFord are similar to those used in the TOWP. DeFord created profiles which allowed for comparative data to be generated from the teacher responses to the survey. The major difference between

DeFord's profiles and those developed in this study is that DeFord utilized a bar profile which related to the statements in the sequence that they were posed in the TORP, while the TOWP incorporates a line profile which reflects the teacher's responses to the statements which are grouped according to a specific model. The advantages of the procedure used by the TOWP are that teacher profiles can be superimposed directly on the model. This procedure allows the teachers to be readily identified according to the particular orientation.

Although DeFord suggests that a scoring system based on the teachers' responses can be used instead of the profile, this creates some difficulty, particularly when the respondent indicates a majority of undecided responses. The score for this teacher would not represent any particular orientation, even though it would fall into the range for one of the orientations suggested by DeFord. The range of disagreement scale used to identify a particular orientation in the present study has not been suggested elsewhere in the literature, but in this study it appeared to be the best indicator of the teachers' theoretical position.

Studies into the Effect of Teachers' Beliefs on Children's Writing

Research which has looked at the effect of teachers' beliefs on the writing which is produced by children has concluded that teacher ideologies are reflected in the children's writing (Graves, 1975; Harste, Burke & Woodward, 1980; Haynes, 1984; Mosenthal, 1983; Moss, 1984; Wilucki, 1984). The effects of these beliefs have been expressed along a number of dimensions. Although the orientations have been classed under a variety of titles, the essential thrust of most of the studies has been to note the effects of the two ideologies examined in the present study.

Moss (1984) examined the effect of teachers' instructional behaviors on the writing processes of kindergarten children. She concluded that children's writing processes and perceptions are related to the ideological perspective which the teacher brings to writing instruction. Haynes (1984) conducted research into the relationship of teaching approaches to the writing achievement of Grade Three students. What she found was that instructional methods based on particular beliefs could account for success measured in terms of the writing achievement of the students. A study done by Mosenthal (1983) showed that teachers' beliefs about writing influenced the way in which children understood the writing task. These findings are supported in the present research in that the influence of the teacher's ideology was apparent in the students' approach to the task and in the relative competency of their writing along all dimensions examined.

Brenda Wilucki (1984), whose research design was similar in many respects to that used in the present study, looked at the effect of the teachers' theoretical orientation on kindergartren children's conceptions of written language. By comparing the writing which was produced by the children and interviewing them as to their perceptions of the writing process, Wilucki was able to assess the effect of the teachers' beliefs. She found that the children's writing did reflect the teacher's beliefs. Although this study did not examine the children's perceptions of the writing task as Wilucki did, her findings as to the significant difference in the ability of the children's in the communication/whole language classroom to compose and express their ideas expression of ideas supports very strongly the findings of the present study.

As the introduction of the writing process into classrooms has been a relatively recent phenomena, much of the current research has been concerned with reporting the results of the process approach to writing described in detail in the literature review in this study. In the forefront of these have been the claims made by Donald Graves and his associates(1983, 1984). The findings of the present study do support these claims in a limited sense. Graves' contention that children will develop the "skills" of writing if they are provided with a context which centers on the children actually writing is supported by the findings of this study particularly in measures of handwriting, spelling and length. This finding is also supported by those of Dobson (1983), who reported that children who wrote on a daily basis in a process oriented classroomdid produce "well-spaced, readable" writing.

The children in the process group in the present study illustrated a firm grasp not only of the mechanics of writing, but of more importance, competence in the organization and expression of their ideas. The findings reported by Smith (1984) and Wilucki (1984) support these results. Smith found that the students in his study improved in all of the dimensions outlined in the present study without any overt teaching being given to the students and Wilucki (1984) reported that the children in her "communication/whole language" class perceived the writing task differently from those in the "mechanics/skills" class. It was obvious in the writing produced by the children in the present study that the process children were significantly different from their counterparts in the traditional skills classrooms, and that the major difference was in their overall perception of the writing process.

It is Wilucki's overall conclusion which is best supported by this study. As in Wilucki's study, the children in the traditional skills classes in this study did indicate a reasonable degree of control over the graphic conventions of writing, and although this was not lacking in the process children, there was the added dimension of the writing focus. In general, the writing of the process children did reflect an awareness of and a concern for the reader, as Wilucki states, "The primary focus of their written language was meaning - in the sharing of a message" (1984, p.77).

Summary

This chapter has presented the findings of the study. The two major areas of concern were examined, the ability of the instrument to indicate the theoretical orientation of the teachers and the effect which the teacher's orientation has upon the writing produced by the students.

Based on the teachers' responses, the survey instrument (TOWP) was analyzed to ascertain how well it differentiated between the two theoretical orientations. The majority of the items in the survey did generate a range of beliefs, and overall there was a wide range of responses. Thus, a rationale was provided for the conclusion that the survey did have the potential to differentiate between the two theoretical orientations described in the study. Comparison of the teacher profiles with a model process profile generated two teacher groupings each containing five teachers. On the basis of the deviation of the teachers' profiles from the model process profile the groupings were designated "process," which contained those teachers closest to the model, and "traditional skills," those teachers farthest away from the model.

The responses of these two teacher groups to the key statements in the survey were charted and related to the characteristics of the writing which was produced by the children. Each group was analyzed in detail to determine if and how the teachers' beliefs were reflected in the children's writing. Although no specific individual "type" of children's writing could be identified as to the orientation under which it was written, individual teacher beliefs could be seen in the class sets of children's writing. Some conclusions were reached as to the key characteristics of the writing in each group.

The children's writing was examined further to determine if there were differences between the two groups. Each of the dimensions of the children's writing was subjected to statistical and descriptive analysis. The results indicated that there were significant quantitative and qualitative differences between the writing of the children in the two groups. These results were compared to the findings of related research and several supporting consistencies were noted.

Chapter 5 provides a review of the study together with the main conclusions reached in relation to each of these questions. The implications for instructional practice and further research are provided together with some reflections on the philosophical and theoretical bases of the study .

Chapter 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter provides a summary of the study and the conclusions reached in terms of the four questions which were posed in the study. Implications for teacher education programs, for teaching practice, and for further research are presented. Finally, the philosophical and theoretical implications of the study are reviewed in light of the findings of the study.

Summary

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate the effect which the beliefs held by Grade One teachers about writing and writing instruction has upon the writing which is produced by their students. A rationale was provided for identifying two theoretical orientations to writing, termed in this study a "process" and a "traditional skills" orientation. In order to carry out this investigation, a survey instrument was developed which had the potential to indicate the teachers' orientation. A sample of the children's writing was obtained from each teacher, and the teacher's belief profile and the children's writing were analyzed to determine the extent to which the teacher's beliefs were reflected in the writing. The study, therefore, could be viewed as being made up of three major components, the creation of the survey instrument, the analysis of the students' writing, and the comparison of the teachers' beliefs with the children's writing.

The procedures used in the development of the survey entitled the Theoretical Orientation to Writing Profile (TOWP), involved the generation of a series of statements about writing and the teaching of writing in Grade One, a systematic verification of the items, and a pilot study using teachers in the field. In its final form the TOWP consists of 24 statements about theory and practice in Grade One writing instruction. Each item requires a response according to a five-point Likert scale which indicates the strength of agreement or disagreement which the respondent feels.

The survey and request for children's writing samples were sent to 38 teachers in a mid-sized school system in Alberta, which has a blend of rural and urban populations. Of the responses received, 28 were used in the analysis of the instrument and 24 were used to measure the effects of the teachers' beliefs on the children's writing. As a first step in this process, the teachers' theoretical orientation to writing was established by comparing their responses to a model process profile. As a result of ~~this comparison~~, two groups of five teachers each were identified, one as representative of the process orientation and the other as representative of the traditional skills orientation.

The children's writing from each of these groups was analyzed along six dimensions and the data which were produced were subjected to descriptive and statistical analysis. These data were then related to that obtained from the teachers' responses to the TOWP and the inter-group differences were described. The overall findings of the study were interpreted in terms of the related research, and after consideration of the findings the following conclusions can be drawn.

Conclusions

The survey instrument which was developed has the potential to differentiate the beliefs that teachers hold about the development of writing abilities in Grade One. Although the teacher responses to the survey did range along a continuum, the comparison of these responses with a standard model revealed a diversity of beliefs, of which the extremes were representative of the two orientations partially specified in the statements which constitute the survey. An item analysis of the responses revealed that some of the items failed to differentiate; however, the majority of the items generated enough of a range on the agreement-disagreement continuum to lead to the conclusion that there was a wide variety of beliefs about the content of the statements.

Two sets of statements make up the TOWP, those which describe beliefs and practices associated with the process ideology and those which support the traditional skills position. In general, those beliefs pertaining to the traditional skills orientation had a teacher focus, while those relating to the process referred primarily to the student. Generally, the specifications of the process ideology did not generate a high degree of disagreement, although specific items did appear to be controversial. In contrast, the responses to the specifications of the traditional skills orientation did give a strong indication of the teacher's position. It could be concluded that those statements in the survey which referred to process writing practices were either not considered by some of the teachers to be a part of writing instruction, or that they represented a practice with which they were not familiar.

Based on the range of teacher responses to the TOWP, it can be concluded that the instrument did differentiate between the two orientations specified. The establishment of the model process profile indicated that the instrument has the potential to indicate a process orientation. An alternate profile was established by looking at the degree of agreement that the teacher had with the specifications of the traditional skills orientation combined with the degree of disagreement which the teacher had with the statements which constituted the process orientation. This indication of the rate of disagreeement from the model which the teacher exhibited was taken to mean that the particular teacher considered writing instruction to be teacher centered and directed and, therefore, held a traditional skills orientation to writing instruction.

It can also be concluded that the individual teacher's responses to the statements hinged strongly on the definition of writing which the teacher had. However, the survey deliberately did not define "writing" directly as the definition of the term for each teacher arose out of his/her responses to the constituent items of the survey. Thus, a conclusion can be reached that the TOWP not only has the potential to differentiate between the two orientations but, of equal importance, it has the capability to provide the partial specifications for the definition of writing which the teacher holds.

Teacher's beliefs are not reflected directly in the skills /mechanics dimension of the writing which is produced by the children who receive instruction according to a particular theoretical orientation. They are, however, reflected in the way in which the children choose to select, organize, and express their ideas. Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that neither the appearance of the students' writing nor the command which the students have over the conventional writing skills is an indicator of the teacher's theoretical orientation. An expressed emphasis on skill development on the part of the teachers in the traditional skills group was not apparent in the writing produced by the children in this group when it was compared to the writing produced by children whose teachers did not emphaize mechanics. There was, in fact, evidence that the opposite conclusion should be reached.

The major finding of this study is that there are significant differences between the writing which children produce in process classrooms and that which is produced in traditional skills classrooms. Although there were individual differences, both inter and intra-group, the general conclusion reached in this study is that on all of the statistical and descriptive measures used in this study the performance of the children in the classrooms of the teachers who professed a process orientation exceeded that of the children in the traditional skill classes. The children in the process group indicated a stronger control over the mechanical aspects of writing, those which have been termed the traditional skills, and they tended to write more and to make less spelling errors. It was, however, in the content of the children's writing where the distinction was most apparent.

Although there were exceptions, the writing produced by the children in the process group indicated a maturity which was not in evidence in the other group. Their writing was characterized by an apparent need to communicate ideas which had meaning for not only the writer but also for the reader. They wrote to share their ideas. Thus, the strong sense of audience which was evidenced in their writing was attributed to the literacy environment which springs from the set of student-centered beliefs ascribed to by the teachers in the process orientation.

It was also concluded that these children had spent a great deal of time sharing their writing with the teacher or the other children, as in many of the pieces there was a strong sense of voice evident. As writers they experimented not only with language structures but also with the complexity of ideas. Thus, they appeared to have developed a control over their writing which was not in evidence in the traditional skills group. The conclusion was drawn that because of the teacher's expressed emphasis on meaning, these process writers have developed not only the ability to express their ideas with clarity and vigor, but also have mastered many of the mechanics of writing as a part of this process.

Implications

There are some general implications which can be drawn from this study which have application to any educational situation. Typically, teachers spend a great deal of time and effort trying to define what it is they are doing which enables children to learn. Based on the findings of this study, they may well ask themselves "What am I doing which is impeding the natural learning of my students?" It would appear that the less teachers try to "teach" writing, the more successful the students are in learning how to write. Richard Koch has observed that it "... has been fairly well established what does not work ... (in writing instruction) ... and this covers pretty well nearly everything schools (at every level) are still in the habit of doing" (1982, p.464). In the light of the findings of the present study, Koch's claim has a certain validity. Although it cannot be claimed that the the methods used by the traditional skills teachers did not work, the students in these classrooms were learning a different definition of writing. What the teachers have demonstrated to the students has become part of their conceptions of writing. Somewhere in the welter of skill practice, many of the students have begun to construe the purpose of writing as putting words on paper for the teacher.

Unfortunately, few of the teachers will ever question the value of such practices. What they are transmitting to their students is not only a view of writing, but in very real terms they are expressing their view of the purpose of education. They are demanding conformity and that is what they are getting. They are telling their students that writing is not thinking, and, furthermore, that writing is a subject to be mastered, not a tool to be used to expand their understanding of themselves and their world. The contribution that this study can make to education in general is that it illustrates in a very small way that the changing conception of writing can contribute substantially to a renewed emphasis on student learning instead of teacher teaching.

Implications for Teaching

The intent of this study has not been to simply compare two methodologies used in the teaching of writing to Grade One students; it has stressed throughout the primacy of teachers' beliefs in determining what students learn. Thus, the claim is made that the conclusions reached by this study cannot be attributed to an instructional methodology or technique alone. This being the case, it is apparent that the implications for teaching are as much philosophical as they are directly applicable to classroom instruction. There are numerous methodological and instructional practices which can be detailed which would perhaps allow teachers to move, in Vernon Smith's terms (1984), from the teaching of beginning writing to the nurturing of beginning writers. However, without a change in the ideologies which the teacher holds, explicitly and implicitly, the theory of writing which the students will learn will not be substantially altered.

The implications for teaching, therefore, are described in terms of the possible changes which the teachers can make if they are to develop the writing process in their classrooms. Essentially these changes restate the partial specifications of the process ideology outlined in this study. The teacher of writing should be aware that:

1. The writing process involves more than a methodology or a series of instructional practices. It involves the interaction of a community of writers working together for a common purpose, the mutual exchange of learning experiences.
2. The teacher's response to children's writing dictates the child's conception of his writing and his value as a writer and a person.
3. Writing is a tool for learning not a collection of skills or a device to be used to control students in classrooms, or a means of training students to fit into society.
4. Children can be trusted to develop writing skills if they are allowed to write in environments which stress the validity of personal experience and the acceptance of risk-taking as the *sine qua non* of all learning.
5. The question which should be asked by teachers is not which method or gimmick should be used to entice children into the writing situation, but what can be done to develop contexts which encourage the writer to enter in with enthusiasm and high expectations for personal satisfaction.
6. Writing does not develop apart from language. Thus, teachers must constantly seek opportunities to develop the voices of the children through speaking and writing, for it is only through hearing their own voices that children develop control over their language and themselves.

7. It is only through her or his own writing that the teacher can learn how to help children become writers.

8. Traditional expectations for children's writing achievement in Grade One have been based on a set of criteria which has no relationship to what children can do. The effect of this curriculum has been not only to repudiate their knowledge of language but, of more importance, to replace it with an artificial set of language constructs which bear little resemblance to real language learning.

9. And, finally, children learn to write by writing.

There is one more important implication for teachers of writing. It is for those teachers who already have their children involved in the writing process. The conclusions drawn from this study support and encourage their efforts, and they validate their contention that students who are involved in the process will learn all of the writing skills.

Implications for Pre-service and Inservice Teacher Training

From the foregoing discussion it is obvious that the effectiveness of teacher professional development activities must encompass more than simply sharing new curricular methods and instructional programs. Teacher educators must also consider the values and ideologies of the teachers who are charged with implementing new programs, and of equal importance, the ideology which underlies the new program which is to be implemented. If teachers are to change their view of writing from one which they have developed either as a teacher or a student, they must experience the process themselves. Thus if we claim that we learn to write by writing, we should be consistent and claim that we learn to teach writing by writing. Thus, some obvious steps must be taken both in pre-service and inservice programs.

Instead of being told about writing theory, teachers and prospective teachers must learn to do theory. That is, they must be actively involved in writing workshops which stress the experience of the writing process. The primary goal of such workshops should be to enable the teacher to articulate a theory of writing which will form the foundation for their instructional practice. (The only non-acceptable theory would be that "it has always been done this way.")

Teachers in classrooms must be encouraged to become researchers, investigating the how and why of student's growth as writers. The learning that is done in this process would then form the basis for the curriculum that the teacher develops in her or his class.

Teachers should constantly examine the curriculum which is presented to the children in order to assess what it is demonstrating to the children about learning and, of equal importance, about what the teacher believes about children.

They should learn to teach writing from a writer's perspective.

Implications for Further Research

As was pointed out in the introduction of this study, the study of children's writing is in its infancy and few real answers have been found; however, what the reserach to this point has done has raised some very interesting questions. Those questions can form the basis of further research into how teacher beliefs about writing affect the development of writing abilities in Grade One. These research questions appear to follow directly from the present study.

1. Can the survey instrument used in this research be validated through classroom observation?
2. Can the survey instrument be used as pre -post-test instrument to indicate the degree of change in teachers who are participants in writing workshops?
3. What adaptations need to be made in the TOWP in order that is can be applied at grade levels other than Grade One?

4. What changes need to be made in the items on the TOWP which would make them more valid indicators of a teacher's orientation to writing?
5. What correlation, if any, is there between the TOWP and DeFord's Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile?
6. Will the same correlation between teacher beliefs and student writing be found if alternate methods are used to collect the writing sample?
7. Which items on the TOWP have the strongest correlation with the teachers' classroom practices?
8. In the face of the growing body of longitudinal descriptive research which has "looked into" classrooms where the writing process is operating, what are the students in "traditional"and "process" classrooms learning about writing and what are their conceptions of the writing process?

Reflections on the Meaning of this Study

> We must become more explicit about our own social theories and our philosophies of schooling, upon which we operate and make decisions all the time, but which we only infrequently bring to the surface (Dillon, 1986, p. 432).

> I thingck it wus a dinosaur and a cavman tringcKilisdit and the boy went to a rocky shor and dug-and-dug than he hit a hard bony pys of sckin and cept diging and he found a dinosaur (Grade One student, 1986).

Two thoughts prevail in this reflection on the study of Grade One writing and the effect which teachers' beliefs have upon it. In the first place, as we are reminded by David Dillon, there is a constant need for all of us involved in education to examine and articulate the philosophical underpinnings of our classroom practices. In many ways this thesis has gone part of the way to achieving that goal. But that was perhaps the easy part of the assignment: The difficult part is knowing what to do with the tringcKilisd dragon, now that he has been unearthed.

In many ways our enterprising student has presented us with a problem which represents our newest and certainly greatest challenge as teachers of writing. In a nutshell it says, the student "dug-and-dug" to find the dragon, now what is the teacher going to do with it? How are we to respond to this person who has ventured far beyond the perceived limits of the Grade One mind, who saw in the picture not a story, as every other child in the study did, but a question. And a question few teachers would ask. A question which probably went something like, "What is a rational explanation for the appearance of a dragon outside a house?"

He answered his own question, but in doing so created our problem. If the conference is the central component of the writing process, how does the teacher respond to this writer? It is difficult assignment for any teacher. His phonics are impeccable, given a stylistic preference for certain digraphs. His reasoning is beyond reproach - are we to ask him to add more details, to explain further?

Perhaps the right answers are there and we are simply asking the wrong questions! We are so used to teaching that we have forgotten that we are learners also. Instead of asking what can we teach this writer, we could be asking what can we learn about this creative mind that has added a new dimension to our view of writing. We can rest assured that it will not be the last. For if, in its truest sense, we allow children to access the writing process in our classrooms, there will be many tranquilized dragons waiting to be uncovered "pys by bony pys." And if we are still with the caveman who buried it so long ago, we will not know how to deal with the intrepid adventurer who has made the discovery.

The choice for teachers is simple; if we don't uncover dinosaurs, we won't have to deal with them. And if a bony piece is uncovered by chance, we can quickly and efficiently lay it to rest; a couple of worksheets on hard and soft "c" will soon take care of that. But if we dig up the whole dragon and he roars back to life, we had better be prepared when he blows fire around the classroom.

Our goal, as teachers of writing, has to be, first and foremost, to learn about writing. What our students tell us in their writing must form the basis for our teaching of them. The writing which the children from both orientations produced in this study,, reveals the challenge that is open to us when we allow children to write. How we respond to them depends entirely on our theoretical oreintation, on what we believe about children and their learning. The most exciting part of this discovery process is that it never ends, and so this thesis closes on a note from a student in Teacher X's class, which states quite simply that the work is "To be Kintinud."

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

LETTER TO SURVEY COMMITTEE

APPENDIX A

Letter to Survey Committee

Dear "Experienced Language Arts Person",

Enclosed is a survey instrument designed to differentiate between two distinct sets of beliefs which Grade One teachers hold about the development of writing (I hope!). Very generally, they are "traditional skills" and "whole language" orientations.
Could you take ten minutes of your valuable time to respond to the instrument? As you do, could you comment upon the appropriateness of it with particular attention to the following:

1. The relative clarity of the statements (wording etc.).
2. Your opinion as to the ability of the particular item to differentiate between the two belief systems.
3. Your opinion as to the relative difficulty which a Grade One teacher may have responding. (The response will be anonymous)
4. Any other problems which you can forsee.

Please write directly on the questionnaire.
I appreciate your consideration and help (in advance!).
Now the crunch. Could you return to me by Thursday, May 8?

Sincere appreciation!
John
John Proctor

APPENDIX B

Draft 1 of "Theoretical Orientation to Writing" Survey

Theoretical Orientation to Writing

Directions: Read the following statements about children's early writing development in Grade One and circle the response which best indicates the relationship of your feelings to the statement. Select the ONE best answer which reflects the strength of your agreement or disagreement on a continuum from SD (strongly disagree) through to SA (strongly agree).

1. A major writing problem that many beginning writers have is with letter reversals.	SD 1	2	3	4	SA 5
2. The Grade One teacher should model the writing process by writing with the students during the writing class.	SD 1	2	3	4	SA 5
3. The teacher can help grade one students develop as writers by helping them with the spelling of words as they are writing.	SD 1	2	3	4	SA 5
4. The use of inter-lined paper is necessary because it helps beginning writers to understand that consistent letter size is an important part of the writing process.	SD 1	2	3	4	SA 5
5. The most important aspect of the grade one writing program should be the free expression of the students' ideas.	SD 1	2	3	4	SA 5
6. The ability to print legibly is an essential component of the student's beginning writing development.	SD 1	2	3	4	SA 5
7. Orally sharing what they have written with other children helps beginning writers develop a sense of audience.	SD 1	2	3	4	SA 5
8. Creative drama and role playing contribute to the development of writing abilities of grade one students.	SD 1	2	3	4	SA 5
9. By circling or underlining writing errors the teacher helps the beginning writer to learn from his mistakes.	SD 1	2	3	4	SA 5
10. Opportunities for the students to talk to each other as they write should be an integral part of the beginning writing process.	SD 1	2	3	4	SA 5
11. Beginning writers should be discouraged from using erasers as they write as their errors are better corrected in the editing process.	SD 1	2	3	4	SA 5
12. Beginning writers should be encouraged to experiment with word spellings right from their first writing experience.	SD 1	2	3	4	SA 5
13. If they are given the opportunity children can learn to write in the same way that they learn to talk.	SD 1	2	3	4	SA 5
14. In the initial stages of writing development the teacher or aide should act as a scribe for the writer until he or she learns to form letters and words correctly.	SD 1	2	3	4	SA 5

15. The children's ability to copy words legibly is a fairly good indicator of their writing development.	SD 1	2	3	4	SA 5
16. The most effective way for the teacher to help beginning writers learn how to spell and punctuate is to work with them in editing their own work.	SD 1	2	3	4	SA 5
17. Copying sentence patterns is a good way to get beginning writers started on the writing process.	SD 1	2	3	4	SA 5
18. The grade one teacher should ensure that grade one students have regularly scheduled opportunities to write about what they feel is important.	SD 1	2	3	4	SA 5
19 When they first start to write children should be encouraged to write scribble and picture stories as this is the first step in the beginning writing process.	SD 1	2	3	4	SA 5
20. Worksheets are a useful way of developing and reinforcing the basic writing skills for beginniing writers	SD 1	2	3	4	SA 5
21. Reading and hearing literature read is as essential part of the beginning writing program.	SD 1	2	3	4	SA 5
22. Students who enter grade one knowing how to print letters and spell words need as much help with their writing as do those who don't know how to print and spell.	SD 1	2	3	4	SA 5
23. Beginning writers write best when the topic provided by the teacher is interesting and motivational.	SD 1	2	3	4	SA 5
24. An important part of the beginning writing process is having the teacher ask questions of the writer so that he or she can clarify his ideas.	SD 1	2	3	4	SA 5
25. A good indication of grade one students' writing abilities can be gauged by looking at their ability to complete their workbook exercises reasonably neatly and accurately.	SD 1	2	3	4	SA 5
26. Most authorized basal workbooks contain a reasonably logical sequence of developmental writing activities	SD 1	2	3	4	SA 5
27. Instruction in the basic writing skills is not as important as providing the students with an accepting atmosphere in which to write.	SD 1	2	3	4	SA 5
28. An emphasis on the mechanics of writing helps the beginning writer to establish a solid base for later writing development.	SD 1	2	3	4	SA 5
29. Worksheet activities are important in that they provide that essential structure which grade ones need in order to develop as writers.	SD 1	2	3	4	SA 5
30. Writing groups allow beginning writers to interact and interaction is an essential part of the writing process.	SD 1	2	3	4	SA 5

APPENDIX C

Letter Which Accompanied Draft 1 of TOWP

Dear Colleague,

The enclosed survey instrument is part of a writing research project which I am conducting as part of my Graduate Studies. It is intended to discern some of the beliefs which Grade One teachers hold about how children learn to write in their classrooms. In order to check the validity of the survey before I do the actual research, I need your help.

Could you find time to respond to the survey?

I would appreciate any feedback you could provide regarding the clarity of the statements, and/or any other problems you had in responding to the statements.

I will use your responses to create the final draft of the instrument which will be used in the actual research project.

Your response will be anonymous, and will be used only for the purpose described above.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

APPENDIX D

Letter of Approval from Superintendent

June 5, 1986

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Mr. John Proctor has requested permission to distribute the attached questionnaire as part of his research project.

Please be advised that permission has been given and I encourage you to complete the questionnaire and return it to John.

Thank you for your cooperation.

APPENDIX E

Letter Sent to Participating Teachers

FROM: John Proctor
TO: Grade One Teachers
Dear Colleague,
As part of my graduate reseach I am looking at the kind of writing which Grade One students produce at the end of their first year.
If you would be willing to help me collect writing samples from your class I thank you!
Here is the procedure I would like you to follow:

1. Give each student a copy of the enclosed picture.
2. Ask the children to write a "story" which tells what happened after the boy brought the dragon home;

   OR

   Explain how the boys got to bring the dragon home,

   OR

   They may simply write a story about what the picture makes them think of.

3. It is important for you to follow your usual procedure when having your students write.

   IN THE ENCLOSED ENVELOPE:

4. Send me only the FIRST DRAFT of each student's writing. The student's may wish to write DRAFT on their writing. This is fine. N. B. If the students put their names on their papers, you may wish to cut them off or erase them as your response is to be completely anonymous.

5. On Friday, June 6 I will send you a short survey questionnaire which would like you to fill in.

6. Please return the stories and the completed survey together in the return envelope Tuesday June 10.

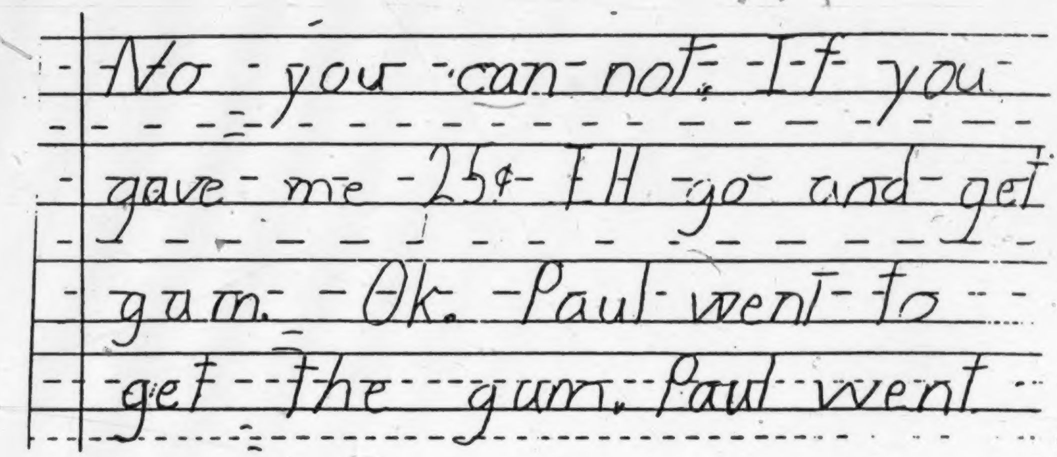
This project is not related in any direct way to your Language Arts program. It will be used only as part of my personal research. Your responses will be completely ANONYMOUS and the writing will be discussed only as it relates to my research that I am doing with Dr. Grace Malicky at the University of Alberta
Thank you for your anticipated cooperation!
Kind regards,

John

APPENDIX F

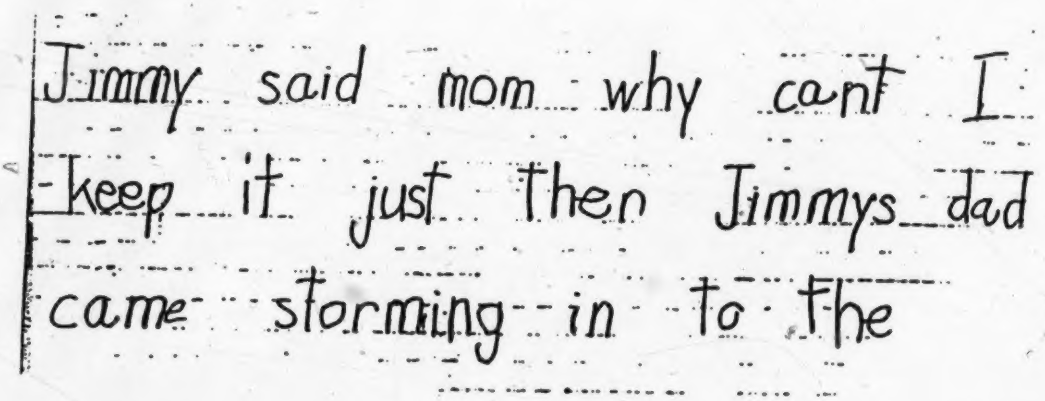
Examples of Handwriting Scoring Criteria

Example 1 **Score 5**



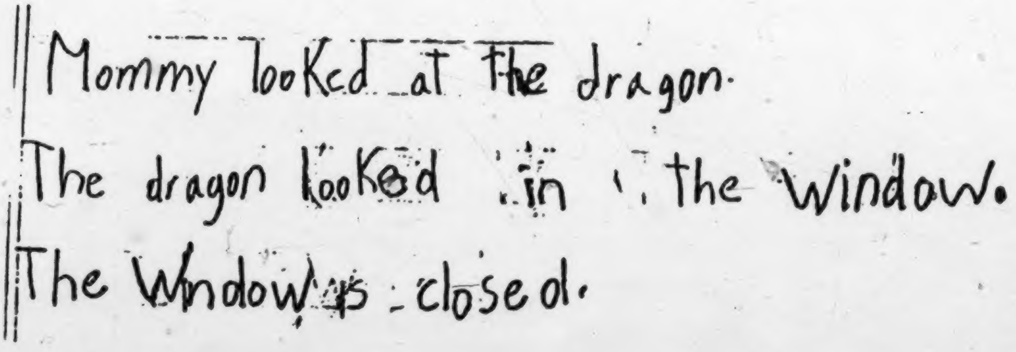
No you can not. If you
gave me 25¢ I'll go and get
gum. Ok. Paul went to
get the gum. Paul went

Example 2 **Score 4**



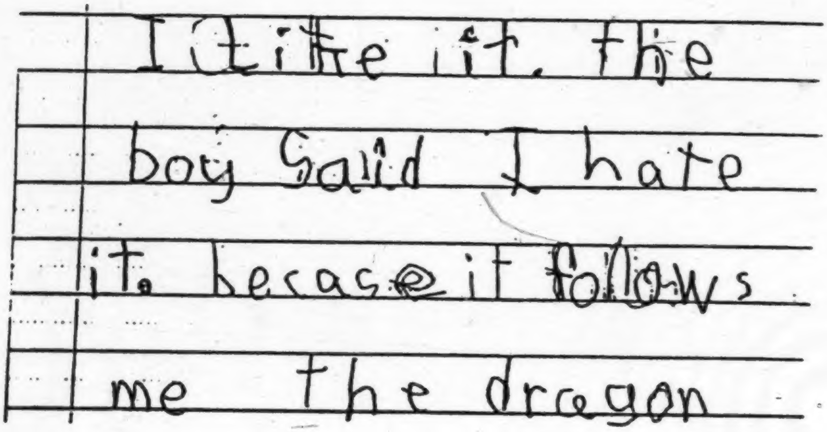
Jimmy said mom why cant I
keep it just then Jimmys dad
came storming in to the

Example 3 **Score 3**

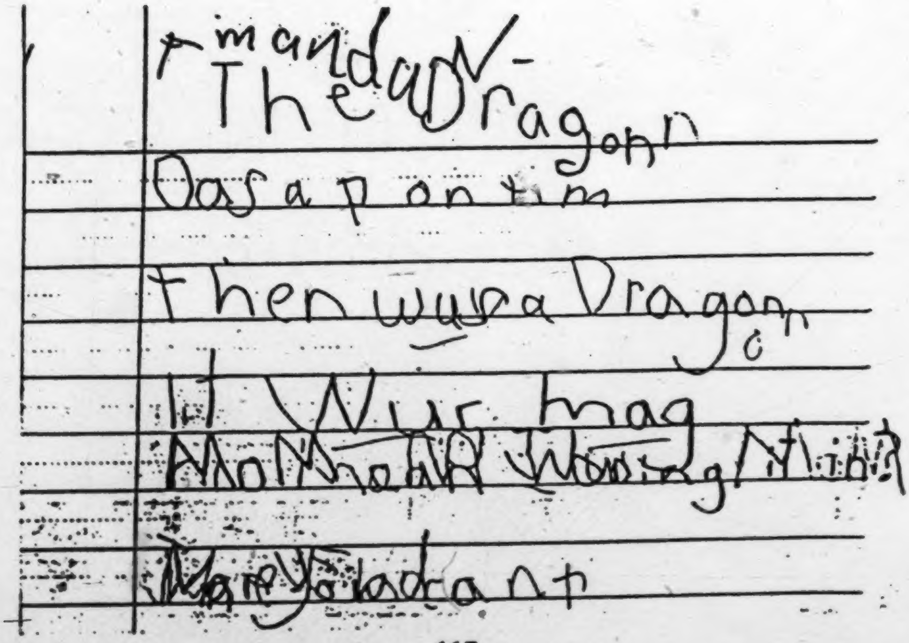


Mommy looked at the dragon.
The dragon looked in the window.
The Window is closed.

Example 4 Score 2


I like it. the
boy Said I hate
it. becase it follows
me the dragon

Example 5 Score 1


mandar-
The Dragon
Oas a p on tim
Then wus a Dragon
it Wus mag
[illegible]
[illegible] ant

APPENDIX G

The "tringcKilisd"dragon

I thingck it wus a

dinosaur and a cavman

tringcKilisdit and

theboy want to a

rocky shor and

dug-and-dug

than he hit

a hord bony pys

of sckin

...and ɔept diging

and he found a

dinosaur